Pipes AND TOBACCOS

Summer 1998

"FRIDAY THE 13TH"
Author Victor Miller

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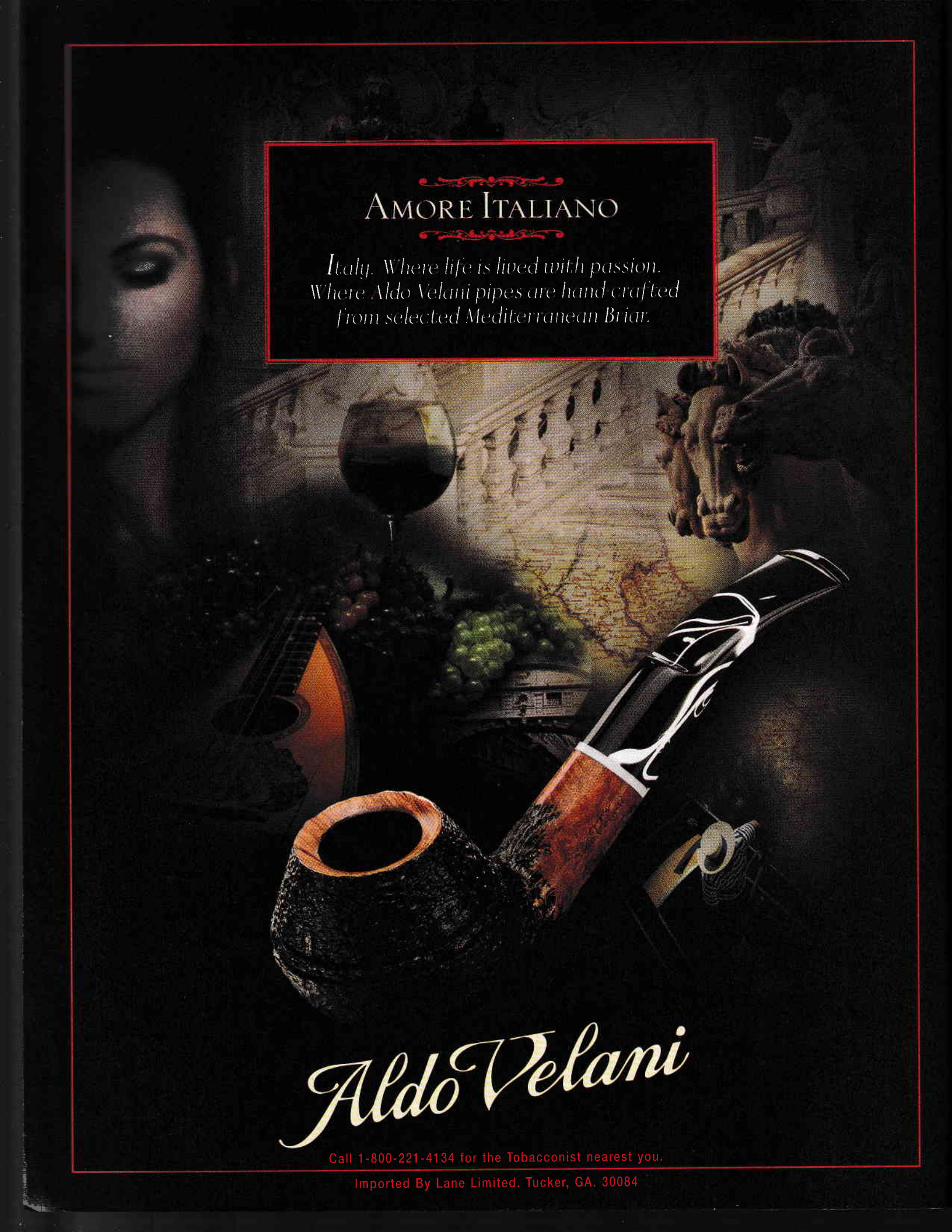
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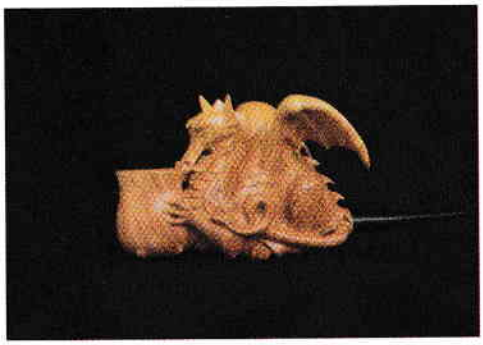

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16 **Breaking in a new pipe**
The number of techniques for breaking in a pipe are seemingly infinite. But there are a couple of rules you should be aware of to ensure the long life and proper smoking characteristics of your new briar pipe.

25 **Meerschaum**
That most elusive and mysterious mineral, meerschaum, is found deep in the depths of the earth. But the shapeless blocks of sepiolite must be extracted from Turkish mines using generations-old mining techniques before becoming the fantastic sculptures that smokers prize.

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Victor Miller, two-time Emmy Award-winning author, novelist and pipe smoker, is also the creator of the original "Friday the 13th" film. He reflects on the nature of such fame in this *P&T* interview.

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A mystical meeting of famous minds takes place in this poem about good fellowship and great smoke.

36 **Size isn't everything**
Craig and Patty Tarler started Cornell & Diehl Tobacco partly for fun, and partly to stay active during their retirement. The fun and activity, though, have expanded far beyond their expectations.

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50 **American cyber shop**
In the wilds of Pennsylvania, Mark Tinsky's American Smoking Pipe Company is barely able to keep up with popular demand. The quality of the pipes is clearly at the heart of the recognition Tinsky has earned, but he also credits his all-important marketing presence on the Internet.

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Fifty years ago, Marxman pipes were among the most popular in the United States. Though the manufacture of these distinctive pipes was relinquished long ago, they remain an important part of pipe history.

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Cover

When nodules of meerschaum are dug from the earth, as described in the article beginning on page 25, they are light beige in color, imbedded with stones. This layer is taken off and each piece is evaluated for the number of pipes it might yield. The pipes shown on the blocks were both created in the shop of Tekin Uzkesici, the one on the left by Medet Emin and the one on the right by Böglan.

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Bite that hand!

Anti-smoking sentiments were interesting, and maybe a little spooky, to observe for a while. It was good for an occasional laugh to see how outrageous the behavior could be.

But now it's closing on the apocalyptic. Smoking as a diversion, a hobby, a mode of relaxation, is not just changing. It is being exterminated.

In England—a country much more tolerant of smoking than the U.S.—prospective adoptive parents who smoke are rejected in favor of nonsmokers. The message: smokers are inferior parents.

Here in the States a police officer was recently fired for smoking. The Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts voted 7-0 to uphold a law giving local officials the power to fire any police officer or firefighter hired since 1987 who is found smoking—*on- or off-duty*. For reasons of insurance and pension, these municipal workers are denied the right to smoke in their own homes, on their own time. Other municipal governments have similar laws. So we are now letting *insurance companies* into our living rooms to control our behavior. What's next? What shall we do?

First, call 1.800.343.3222. This is an automated line set up by the major cigarette manufacturers to help you register your dissatisfaction with current oppressions.

Beyond that, every citizen should take 10 minutes to write a letter of outrage to their designated representative. Every day we see anti-smoking hysteria grow more preposterous. Doubtless we all think that common sense *must* reappear soon, that no rational country will permit this nonsense forever.

But it is becoming abundantly clear that we do not live in a rational country.

The idiots we have elected have found a safe target in the smoking community. They do not care about issues of health; they care only about *appearing* to be effective politicians while remaining politically safe. By some odd fluke of circumstances they have instilled in us a sense of contrition, prompting us to whimper quietly when attacked, instead of defending ourselves.

Everyone likes dogs. But we don't want to *be* dogs. A whipped dog accepts whatever punishment is doled out, with no thought of justice, and returns to its abusing master to lick his hand.

Shall we continue to lick the hand of government? Have we forgotten that in this country *we* are the masters, and elected officials are the dogs?

It is time to stop mutely accepting the abuse; it is time to stop whimpering about unjust retribution; it is time to stop licking the hand of government.

It is time to bite government on its bureaucratic ass!

Write that letter. Make that call. Do it *not* because it is your right, but because it is your *obligation* as an American citizen to preserve your freedoms. Only by biting the hand that serves us will we earn the right to stop whining, to stop groveling, to claim the dignity due all active citizens and to rise from our bellies and paws to stand as free human beings.

Chuck

Stories in progress:

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P&T Readers Respond

Tobacco options

I smoked cigars for a number of years, but about a year ago I bought my first pipe. Since that day I rarely fire up a cigar. I consider myself a novice pipe smoker, constantly reading and talking with more experienced pipe smokers to acquire as much knowledge as I can. I love *P&T*—my only regret is that it is published only quarterly.

I am writing to express how much I enjoyed the Spring 1998 issue, especially the article on Germaine & Son by Dayton H. Matlick, and the outstanding follow-up, "Tobacco Talk," by Kevin Cook. I for one, and most of the regulars who hang around the pipe and tobacco shop I frequent, would like to see many more such articles, if not a permanent feature on the order of "Tobacco Talk." It would be nice to see similar write-ups on Dunhill, MacBaren, W.O. Larsen, Ashton, McClellands, Royal Vintage, etc. It would also be nice to see articles comparing similar blends that are produced by various brands.

One of the saddest things that I have learned in speaking with many longtime pipe smokers is that a very high percentage of them smoke one brand, one blend, period! That is amazing to me because in the very short time I've been smoking the pipe I have tried a number of blends. The variety of flavors is very interesting. I find myself alternating from one brand/blend to another, depending on my mood. In my opinion, smoking only one brand, one blend, is one-dimensional. Pipe smokers who do so are missing out on a whole world of delicious and enticing aromas and flavors.

John Lavorini
Elmwood Park, Illinois

P&T: We intend to provide tobacco articles as regular features, with Cornell & Diehl Tobacco in the current issue. Kevin Cook's "Tobacco Talk" will also be a regular—we received a terrific amount of mail applauding his work. Right now his column is geared toward the blends of whatever tobacco company we are featuring, so you'll see reviews of C&D tobaccos in this issue's "Tobacco Talk." In the future, however, we may be expanding that coverage, providing comparisons of similar blends from many companies.

Not all of our readers choose the letter format to make their views known to us. For example, a gentleman from Anchorage, Alaska (who shall remain nameless), submitted the following series of notes scratched on pages torn from the last issue of P&T.

Scribbled on page 21, *the opening page of the Dave Berg article, with an arrow pointing to the sentence "...Berg also takes on serious issues, such as racial prejudice or what he sees as the absurdity of the NRA position on gun control.":*
"What!?? I will tell all of my pipe-smoking friends to avoid your magazine like the plague!!!"
Scribbled on page 6, *the Editorial, which lampoons the anti-everything movement:*
"You can add anti-second amendment zealots to your list (such as Dave Berg who you feature in this magazine)."
Scribbled on a subscription card:
"I'll save my $ for NRA donations (see Berg article)."

We wish to remind this gentleman that the common bond among readers of this magazine is pipes and tobaccos. Some of us are pro-NRA; some are not. We are a community that represents a full spectrum of opinions on every subject, from capital punishment to breakfast cereal. What sets us apart is that we think about and formulate these opinions over a smoldering bowl of fine tobacco.

Differing convictions fuel and elaborate those of others. If P&T removed every opinion our subjects offer in our interviews, this would be a very short and uninteresting magazine indeed. In this case P&T is certainly not undermining the Second Amendment; it is merely practicing the First.

On the issue of offensive ads...

In our pitifully small fraternity (and sorority...sorry ladies) of people who share by choice the enjoyment of tobacco, we seem more than ever to be "kicked while we're down." The anti-smoking crusaders are irritating enough, restricting us to our assigned "stalls" where they allow us to smoke, or more frequently booting us outdoors.

I've always assumed that pipe smokers represented a genre slightly out of the mainstream, at least a bit toward the liberal side. Well, I stand corrected. How ironic it is that some of our own find something new to complain about, namely the CAO advertisement in your Winter issue. I'm still waiting for the punch line!

Art comes in many forms. Ad design not only requires its own type of creativity, but also an intense amount of research and business sense. If CAO's medium for grabbing readers' attention happens to be via a mildly sexy photo, so be it! Should censorship get that serious? Is *P&T* magazine going to have to be packaged in a brown wrapper with a stamped warning: "To Be Opened By Addressee Only—Sexually Oriented Material"? C'mon, let's get real!

I have to congratulate *P&T* for the calm, even-tempered, diplomatic response to these complaints. I would have told the complainers to put these things in perspective and to count their blessings. A pipe ad with a nude is not all that threatening. Let's let the ad artists get on with their work!

Mike Adams
Redford, Michigan

In reference to the complaints about the CAO advertisement, I find it hard to believe that anyone is going to turn to stone seeing a pipe being held by a semi-nude woman. OK, maybe it's not destined

to hang in the Louvre, but I scarcely think it's some foul, pornographic beacon of moral decay threatening to destroy the souls of all children within a 10-foot radius either. I love looking at well-sculpted meerschaum, and my only thought on seeing the ad was, "I wish they'd show more than just two pipes." Then I turned the page. My advice to the offended is to (1) light up your favorite pipe, (2) turn the page, and, most importantly, (3) relax.

Jeffrey Hunt
South Berwick, Maine

I appreciate the letter asking me to refresh my memory on the advertising on page 21 in your Winter 1998 issue. I enjoyed my review. I wondered if this wasn't a beautifully designed ploy to make me pull this past issue. Being an advertising manager for a regionally based newspaper, I just wish I could have made so many people review an ad in my paper!

Larry Matthews
Raleigh, North Carolina

Thank you for the considerate response to my letter. I think that you captured the crux of the issue very well. You acknowledge that as the publisher of *P&T* you have, and reserve the right to, censor ads. The need for censorship is not the question. My input is only that the image on page 21 of the last issue should cross the threshold for rejection. I do appreciate that the CAO advertisement was not included in the present issue. However, my understanding of your response is that I can expect the CAO advertisement, or similar adds, to appear in future issues. I also appreciate your point that the decision to reject a submitted advertisement is difficult and subjective. You're absolutely right, sex sells and many will welcome such advertisements. But, it's not the only way to sell ads in a publication geared toward pipe smokers, which is already a niche market. There's no reason to push the envelop on indecency and unnecessarily alienate someone.

But, that's enough of my feeble attempt at market analysis. The issue for me is really a personal one. I respect your right and responsibility to decide the character of your publication. I also respect myself enough to refrain from supporting a publication that represents our hobby in what I consider a negative light. Please remove my name from the *Pipes and tobaccos* distribution list.

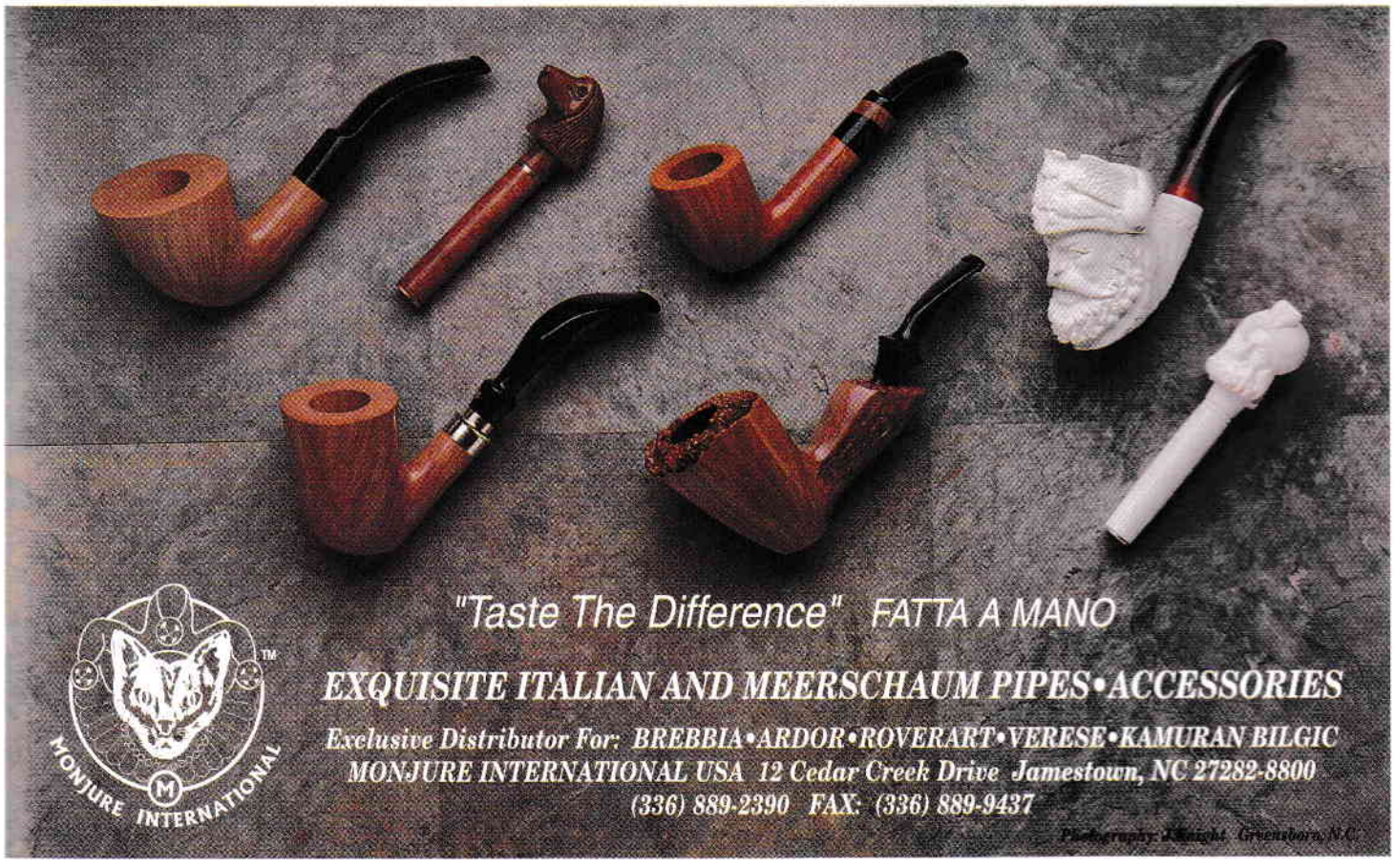
John Hughey
Phoenix, Arizona

Web site request

I just discovered your magazine on a recent trip to D.C. and enjoy it very much. From some of the statements in the Letters to the Editor it appears there is information in previous editions which would be of interest to me and to other new readers. Would you consider adding a "Previous Issues" section to your Web site?

Welby Pugin
Cyberspace

P&T: Consider it done. We have revised our Web site to include the contents pages of all previous issues, which should help you choose what back issues you wish to order. You can order these issues online, you can peruse the letters column or "Ask Chuck," and read a couple of features from the current magazine. ▶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You can also submit letters and inquiries, and there's even a chat room, where you can talk to other pipe lovers in real time. On top of that, the site looks a lot better. Check it out at: http://www.pt-magazine.com/

Heathens revisited

I would like to respond to Tom Stoup's objection [Spring 1998] to the "Heathen Swine" letter that appeared in your Winter 1998 issue. I am both a pipe smoker and an NRA activist (a member since age 14) and it has been my experience that the vast majority of gun owners are far more tolerant of the rights and "personal space" of others than Mr. Stoup implies.

I hope you will continue to express all of the thoughts, attitudes and experiences of your writers as well as your readers.

Lane Raper
Jackson, Wyoming

Am I missing something here? Mr. Stoup's presumption (Spring 1998) that pipe smokers and NRA "activists" are mutually exclusive is in error. Were it true this subscriber would be compelled to choose between two long-enjoyed hobbies.

Firearms and tobacco have become entangled in politics (not an area of interest), which is regrettable. I would defend my right to both. These are hobbies this writer intends to pursue.

As for Mr. McGhee (Winter 1998), whose pipes were stolen, I join in regretting his loss. I would encourage him to visit his local tobacconist or a pipe show and begin rebuilding his collection. Again, pipes are a hobby, objects that are replaceable. The friendships made and to be made (not to mention the pursuit of the perfect blend!) represent the true value of the hobby.

George J. Fink
Cyberspace

Aww, gee, *stop it!*

I never in my wildest dreams thought I'd be subscribing to a magazine about pipes, but I find your publication fascinating.

I've been smoking pipes since college, but had no idea that people spent so much time discussing them or so much money purchasing them.

You have a wonderful magazine. I read it from cover to cover. Keep up the good work.

Jim Ferrone
South China, Maine

Kudos to everyone at *P&T* for a superior publication! I wait in anticipation for each new issue. My pipe seems that much more enjoyable when I can peruse my new issue of *P&T*. My only wish would be for a monthly issue...alas, good things come to those who wait! It is about time someone recognized the great work of David Berg: always a delight. I grew up sitting on my father's lap, watching his pipe smoke rise and listening to the antics of Kaputnik, et al. Now, 20 years later, it is I who is puffing on the briar and reading the magazines. Thanks to *P&T* for the memories and the sensational articles.

Larry Shuman
Quechee, Vermont

I have been looking for a publication devoted to pipes and I was very excited when your magazine was handed me where I purchase my tobacco. I have been taking it slow, reading only a section at a time in order to make it last longer.

Joe Bullis
Hays, North Carolina

I just received the back issues I ordered.

I must say, after some initial e-mail problems suffered last year while trying to subscribe to your magazine, your care with your customers is comparable to the quality of your magazine: excellent!

I live in a country where people can play soccer very well, raise some fantastic Formula-One drivers, dance the Samba as no one else can, but YOU publish the most terrific material on pipes, as seen nowhere else. *P&T* is not superficial; the articles are great, with nice photos, and that is why I wanted so much to subscribe.

Congratulations, and I hope to be with you for a long time.

Jose Carlos Aires
Brazil

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I have been smoking a pipe for 32 years, and have enjoyed it thoroughly, although lately it has become difficult because many stores have closed and I have had to hunt pipe shops down.

I was beginning to think I was the only one still smoking pipes until I received a complimentary copy of your magazine.

Oh happy day!

After reading the entire issue I immediately sent for a subscription for one year.

But enclosed you will find a check for three years more. I even called your phone number and was able to get all your back issues. Thank you so much!

John H. Barton
Rochester, New York

I was surprised and extremely pleased to find the Winter 1998 issue of *Pipes and tobaccos* at our local bookstore. In this land of 10,000 lakes and "smoke free" public places, it seems that anyone showing an interest in smoking of any kind is a candidate for public shunning. Why, many of our restaurants ban smoking entirely, and of those that allow it pipes and cigars are excluded! To make matters worse, if that's possible, there are very few tobacconists here where one can get a decent pipe.

In any event, your recently found issue has added immensely to my enthusiasm for pipe smoking and pipe lore. You've put together a quality product that I am looking forward to making a collection of.

Enclosed is my subscription form and a check to cover the cost of your first seven issues plus shipping.

Bruce Mikeworth
Owatonna, Minnesota

Personality Profile suggestions

The wonderful two-part article on Mark Twain is truly a masterpiece. The historical details and the role which tobacco played in Twain's writing were just great. I loved his answer to the moral statisticians of his day—how he took the whole batch of their statistics and lit his pipe with them! Bravo! Please publish more articles like this one. Perhaps some articles on a few other famous pipe smoking writers such as: Edgar Allen Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Raymond Chandler, Georges Simeon and Harlan Ellison. You have the greatest magazine on pipes and tobaccos. I never miss an issue. Keep up the great work!

Patrick Hannan
San Bernardino, California

Castello response

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Your article about Castello pipes is the best such article I have ever seen. Be sure that I am very proud and am sincerely filled with great emotion. Many compliments on a great story with romantic photos, and for your great magazine.

Franco Coppo
Pipa Castello
Cantu, Italy

Success at last!

I've been smoking a pipe on and off for nearly 30 years, but mostly off. Why? I always loved the smell of good pipe tobacco, but as much as I enjoyed the aroma it always tasted harsh. So, once a year I smoked my pipe. Nice smell, lousy taste. I just couldn't figure

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out what I was doing wrong or why I couldn't get that same look of calm contentment like the other pipe smokers had.

After reading over the first few issues of *P&T* and learning things I'd never learned before, I figured this was a good magazine and took out a three-year subscription.

The next best thing I did was to revisit my friend, Jim Shimon, owner of Hill & Hill Pipe & Cigar Tobacconist in Grosse Pointe.

Jim's been in the business for many years and is one of the most knowledgeable men I know about pipes. I told him that I wanted to learn how to enjoy smoking a pipe. Jim showed me everything from A to Z. My pipe smoking satisfaction has increased 100 percent.

I also asked him about an article you published about the difference between cheap and expensive pipes. He told me the same things you said in your article, about price of briar, how long it is aged, sanding, polishing, drying period, etc. I decided to give it a try and bought a pipe Jim had shown me—a 30-35-year-old Charatan executive. The experience was incredible. I never knew a pipe could smoke so great. Then Jim told me how it improves the more you smoke it.

Since then I have also bought a Dunhill and have never regretted the expense. So thank you Jim Simon and thank you *P&T* for getting me excited about pipe smoking again.

Andy Alexiou
St. Clair Shores, Michigan

Anti-smoking hysteria

I applaud the perseverence of pipe smokers in these days of anti-smoking. I would imagine the thought among the ashtray stompers is "We can't do anything about crime...we can't do anything about illegal drugs...let's attack smokers!" So, acknowledging that they don't even have all the evidence, they are after us, getting the general public into a self-righteous uproar.

Here in Maryland, I really do believe that I'd be held in higher esteem if I were an AIDS-infected gay drug user instead of a pipe smoker. In Baltimore's baseball stadium, which is all open air and uncovered, smoking is prohibited. If I were to light my pipe, I'd be ushered out of there before my first tamp. Yet the guy next to me can drink all the beer he can pay for. When you're leaving the stadium, who do you want driving in the next lane, the guy who has had too many pipes or the guy who has had too many beers? It doesn't matter to me at all since I've never been to the stadium and never will be.

D. Wagner
Baltimore, Maryland

Last night my 14 year old daughter and I read part of John Locke's "Social Contract" for her school assignment. We began to discuss the role of government in our lives and the depths of freedom that Locke viewed for the individual in this 1680's treatise. Locke's view of the contract between the individual and his government was very limited. The government provided protection for your property and foreign intrusion on your freedoms. A minor but now very significant part of the contract with your government was to protect your individual freedoms that made your spirit free. When I opened my newest issue of *Pipes and tobaccos*, I was mentally pulled back to our discussions by the editorial page on the "Antis" and the excellent reprinted article from the *Economist*. The steps that our government has taken to protect the health of the individual have far exceeded the firm philosophical foundations from English tradition that our founders intended. I care not to be protected by our government from the pleasures of life I enjoy. Yes, I have a contract with my government. But it does not include intrusion on my right to smoke an artfully handcrafted briar pipe with the aged and beautifully blended tobaccos that I enjoy. It doesn't include intrusion on my right to visit a nice restaurant and enjoy a finely crafted beer at my favorite brewpub. The mentality of the prohibitionist is set. Their numbers will grow.

One important point that John Locke made in his "Social Contract" is rarely covered. It dealt with the commonwealth principle. Even if a majority involved in the contract (read U.S. government) felt that an action should be taken, it could never overstep the clearly defined lines of infringing on my rights to pursue my "free spirit." We have clearly gone beyond this point.

Larry M. Matthews
Raleigh, North Carolina

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Breaking in a New Pipe

by Rick Newcombe

Did you ever put on a pair of brand new jeans that felt tight, stiff and scratchy? Compare that to wearing a pair of old comfortable jeans that you've worn a hundred times before, that have been washed dozens of times, and that fit you perfectly. They are the essence of comfort and relaxation.

What is the difference between the starched jeans and the well-worn jeans? Obviously, the ones that we like most are the jeans that have been "broken in." They fit us; they suit our personality; it's almost as if they're a part of us. Well, I believe the same applies to pipes, and I can assure you that I am not alone. I discussed the issue of breaking in pipes, including various techniques for facilitating the process, with dozens of experienced pipe smokers, and I was struck by how important this issue is to all of them. I also was struck by the number of highly creative suggestions they had for making it easier to enjoy your new pipes as quickly as possible.

Bill Fader

While breaking in a pipe is a process we hear about frequently, as if it had only one meaning, the truth is that it means different things to different smokers. It is a more complicated subject than most realize, but it is worth studying the issue and mastering the system that works best for you, because the only way to reach the highest level of pipe-smoking enjoyment, relaxation and total satisfaction is to smoke a pipe that has been broken in completely—just like those soft jeans.

Obviously, the techniques for the beginning pipe smoker apply to everyone, including the most experienced collector. When you have a new pipe, the key is to smoke slowly. Some pipe experts recommend filling the bowl halfway and smoking all the way to the bottom, or until all the tobacco has turned to ash. They say that with each bowl you should gradually fill the pipe with just a little more tobacco so that you won't be smoking a complete pipe bowl, from top to bottom, until the fifth or sixth time that you smoke the pipe.

Other pipe experts disagree entirely and recommend loading the pipe to the top on the very first bowl. I remember once buying a pipe from Bill Fader of Fader's Tobacconist in Baltimore, and he asked me what kind of tobacco I liked. I said English/Oriental blends, and he loaded the pipe to the top of the bowl with his blend called Istanbul. A number of years later I visited the workshop of S. Bang in Copenhagen, Denmark, and one of the two pipemakers, Per Hansen, watched me load up a new pipe he had just made for me. I filled it about two-thirds of the way to the top. "Why don't you fill it all the way?" he asked. "You know it's a myth that you should start halfway and work your way up. That only applies to very cheap wood that might crack. With a good pipe, you should start with a bowlful of tobacco."

One of the most knowledgeable of American pipemakers is Paul Perri. He has been making pipes for more than *60 years*, and his father and grandfather made pipes, as well. Paul is one of the finest people you could hope to meet—a real gentleman. He was friends with another great American pipemaker, Sydney Ram, who had an interesting theory about new pipes. "We used to call him 'God-Bless-America' Ram," says Paul, "because Sydney always recommended dipping a new pipe into a glass of water long enough to say 'God Bless America.'

Rich Esserman

"Then he would dry it off with a towel and run a pipe cleaner through it. Sydney believed that a quick dip in the water would prevent the wood from cracking."

I tried this once, and it was on a pipe made by Sydney Ram. The pipe was unsmoked and it had been made 50 years earlier. The water did not appear to cause any damage, and the pipe smoked fine. But I would not recommend this practice. Again, the best way to avoid problems at the beginning is to smoke a new pipe extremely slowly. If you are a hot smoker and find this too difficult to do, then during the break-in period you might want to keep two pipes lit at the same time: one of your regular, broken-in pipes that you can smoke, and the new one, that you just want to keep barely smoldering with an occasional puff.

Randy Wiley, one of America's best contemporary pipemakers, says it is extremely important that the tobacco burns uniformly. "You want to keep it well lit in the center," he says. "What you want to avoid is having an intensely heated area on one side or the other."

Many people like to put a light coating of honey inside the bowl, while others use water or saliva, and of course many pipemakers use a carbon coating. My personal favorites are Jess Chonowitsch's and Jim Cooke's. Jim developed the secret formula for his coating with the late Barry Levin. There are plenty of other good ones. Of course, there are many pipe experts who want raw wood only.

Gary Humphrey, a passionate pipe collector from Anchorage, Alaska, has a unique system for breaking in pipes. "I only smoke pipes with giant bowls, and when I get a new pipe I'll smoke it every day for seven days in a row," he says. "At that point, I figure it's about as broken in as it will ever be."

Richard Esserman, an experienced collector who is one of the organizers of the New York Pipe Show, has a similar

attitude. "I'm an impatient guy," he says. "None of my pipes take over 10 bowls to break in." Rich has developed a very specific procedure for treating new pipes. First, he applies a small amount of water to the inside of the bowl—just a light coating. He lets it dry and then repeats the procedure. He likes to do this two or three times to let the water soak in and then evaporate. He then applies just a little bit of honey to coat the inside of the bowl before he puts in his tobacco.

J. T. Cooke

"The first bowl that I smoke is irrelevant," he says. "It's mostly to make sure the pipe doesn't crack. With each new bowlful of tobacco, the pipe keeps getting better."

Basil Sullivan, the renowned Charatan collector who for years organized the annual Indiana Briar Friars meeting, speaks for many pipe smokers when he says, "I just hate to break in new pipes. I much prefer to buy estate pipes because someone else already did the hard work of breaking in the pipe—and I do mean hard work!"

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Shane Pappas, a successful tobacconist who sold the Briar Rose pipe shop in Carson, California, last year. Shane takes an extremely controversial position on this issue. "For me, the best smoke on any pipe is the first bowl. It only gets worse with each successive smoke," he says. "Yes, I'm talking about briar pipes," he says, anticipating most smokers' thoughts that he must be referring to corncobs and clay pipes, but surely not briar.

Without question, my own experience is that the vast majority of collectors agree with Basil. In fact, I do not know a single pipe smoker who shares Shane's opinion on this matter, but if you do, please let us know of your experience.

Andy Herbruck of Del Mar, California, who has bought and sold hundreds, if not thousands, of pipes over the years, has a very interesting technique for breaking in a new pipe. "I'll light it, take a few puffs, tamp down the tobacco, and then let the pipe sit overnight," he says. "The following day I'll do the same thing all over again. It might take me five or six days to smoke a single bowl. I'll repeat this process five or six times. I believe it is very important to smoke the same type of tobacco in the pipe. I've been a collector for 25 years, and I just discovered this system by accident. My new pipes just seem to smoke better if they're broken in this way. I think what's happening is that you're warming it up and then letting it dry out, and you may be getting the moisture out."

It would seem that there is no inherently right or wrong way to break in a pipe. As tobacconist John Cox of W. Curtis Draper in Washington, D.C., once told me: "If you put five pipe smokers in a room, you'll get five different opinions." But one fact upon which everyone agrees is this: If you allow the briar to become too hot, it will crack. That's what is called an absolute.

All collectors, with a dozen different theories each on how best to break in a pipe, understand that new pipes should be smoked slowly—repeat: *slowly*—and the tobacco should burn evenly down the center of the bowl.

While researching this topic, I came across a copy of *Pipe Lovers Magazine* from nearly half a century ago, and it is obvious that nothing has changed on this subject in the past 50 years, nor will it change in the next 50. The September 1949 issue of the magazine offered this advice: "Most burnouts are attributed to improperly breaking in the pipe. It is important to make sure only the best of care is given a new pipe during its breaking-in period. The temperature of the burning tobacco must be kept low enough to keep the bowl from scorching and yet at the same time help form the first layer of cake."

Per Hansen

As for when a pipe should be considered broken in, we're back to five-different-pipe-smokers-with-five-different-opinions. In other words, there is no single answer. What you might consider to be broken in, I might consider to be mostly unsmoked. Bo Nordh of Sweden, who is recognized as one of the finest pipemakers of all time, once told me that a pipe might need to be smoked as many as 50 times before it is thoroughly broken in. Personally, I agree with Bo; that is exactly what my experience has been. But then there's Rich Esserman, who couldn't disagree more. "If I had to wait 50 bowls, I wouldn't own any pipes," he says. Bob Hamlin, president of the Pipe Collector's Club of America, has sold thousands of pipes over the years and is very knowledgeable on the subject. "I doubt if there is a consensus," he says, "but if I had to pick a number out of the air that I've heard most, I'd say about 20 bowls before a pipe is really broken in. Of course, there is no single magic number, and each pipe is different."

On that issue—that each pipe is different—I'm sure there is universal agreement. Some pipes break in more easily than others. Jean Luc Silbereis, a pipe collector who lives in Paris, and who loves Lars Ivarsson's pipes, says: "It's not a matter of a number. It takes the time that it takes. It can happen or never happen. Some never break in—others are fantastic after five or six smokes." Jim Benjamin of San Diego, an expert at cleaning up old pipes to look like new and smoke better than ever, says there are mysteries about briar that we will never understand. "I've got a Barling that didn't smoke well for 32 years, then all of a sudden it just blossomed," he says. "Now it's one of my favorites."

Shane Pappas

I'd suggest trying some of these different systems, experimenting with your own techniques. But keep in mind that pipe smoking is an enjoyable hobby and should never become a complicated chore. As Randy Wiley says, "The system that works best is the one that requires the least amount of hassle."

In the end, regardless of which techniques they use, all pipe smokers know that it is worth the effort to break in their new pipes carefully. Few things in life are as comfortable or give as much pleasure and satisfaction as a pipe that has been thoroughly broken in, cleaned, allowed to air out and dry, and then smoked again—over and over. The beauty is that with each successive bowl, the briar just keeps getting better and better. Imagine what it would be like if every pipe you reached for provided the same comfort level as an old pair of soft jeans. That is what it is like for most experienced pipe smokers, and it is why they value their collections as an endless source of enjoyment. *P&T*

Are Amphora pipes still being manufactured?

Dunhill question

What exactly is meant by "shell briar?"

George Wildgen
Little Rock, Arkansas

The term "shell briar" refers to a Dunhill pipe with a particular finish. A leading expert in the field, known to the pipe community as Pipeguy, explains that there are really two answers to the question. "The short answer," he says, "is that it's a sandblasted pipe made by Dunhill. The long answer is that there are two stories behind it.

"One of the stories," says Pipeguy, "has it that Alfred Dunhill named the pipes for the sound they made when they rattled around together, thinking they sounded like shells."

The other story relates Dunhill's reaction to a briar shipment. "Legend has it," says Pipeguy, "that the briar blocks were wetter than he wanted and in disgust he tossed them into a back corner by the heating stove, where he forgot them. When he retrieved the briar it had dried, but it had also shrunk, each block only a 'shell' of its former self. Although that story sounds nice, it does not account for the sandblasting." So, colorful legends aside, the only fact remaining is the shortest answer. Shell briars are sandblasted Dunhill pipes.

Amphora pipes

I have been a pipe smoker for more than 20 years and currently have a 40-pipe collection that includes meerschaums, calabashes and briars. Although I have acquired excellent quality Petersons, Comoys and Nordings, my favorite pipe is an Amphora X-tra. It is a quarter-bent, squat bulldog with a brown rustic finish, dating from the late '60s or early '70s. I bought it with a coupon for a very modest price years ago.

I am writing to inquire about its origins. Which pipe firm manufactured this pipe? Where was it made? Are they still being made? It's a gem, old as it is.

Edward Ziwich
Whiting, Indiana

Amphora pipes are still made—by the Royal Dutch Pipe Factory of Holland. They are available in many parts of the world, but not in the United States—except during promotions by distributors of Amphora Pipe tobacco (currently G.A. Andron, Arango Cigar, Douwe Egberts Van Nelle and Phillips & King). That's how they get into the U.S.: through promotions such as the one that provided the coupon you used. There is no current U.S. distributor for these pipes.

Amphora pipes come in a variety of grades, sizes and shapes, according to Mark Van Vlodrob of the Royal Dutch Pipe Factory, which makes anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 Amphora pipes each year. The ones we are most likely to see in this country have carved finishes. The manufacturer also makes the Hillson, Royal Dutch and Big Ben lines of pipes, as well as private-label pipes.

Kaywoodie and Medico

I was recently given a small stash of estate pipes consisting of mostly Kaywoodies and Medicos. I haven't heard of either manufacturer in the short time I've been smoking. What can you tell me about these pipes.

John Szymankiewicz
Panama City, Florida

Both Kaywoodie and Medico are manufactured in the United States and distributed by S.M. Frank Company, located in Peekskill, New York. They are inexpensive pipes, with a growing number of collectors becoming interested. Millions of these pipes have been sold, and they account for a high percentage of the used pipes one finds in antique shops. S.M. Frank also manufactures Yello-Bole pipes.

The Pipestuff section of the last issue of *P&T*, on page 62, featured a photo of some of Kaywoodie's new line of quality "Gold Series" pipes. S.M. Frank was founded in 1851, so it has plenty of experience. Watch for an article on Kaywoodie pipes in this magazine toward the end of 1998.

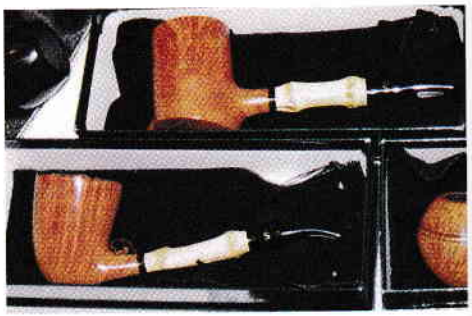
Burnout

In a recent column a reader asked about the "black paint" inside pipe bowls. In the answer, J.T. Cooke said that some Danish makers "use a durable clay which makes a good firewall," and that he "wouldn't guarantee a pipe without that protective coating." About six months ago I purchased a fantastic-looking sandblasted Stanwell with a bamboo shank. I don't remember the shape number, but its bowl was a very large poker shape, and it had that clay coating inside. To make a long story short, it became the first pipe I ever owned that started to burn out its bowl. I was further disheartened when the tobacconist said they couldn't tell me when, if ever, they could get another Stanwell like that one. I left with my refund, but without hope for seeing that swank combination of bamboo and briar again. The moral of this story is that the clay coating could not prevent burnout in the face of a pre-existing flaw in the briar itself.

Jeffrey Hunt
South Berwick, Maine

Your story is a sad but inevitable one, given the nature of briar pipes. Briar is, after all, only wood, though very hard and durable. Still, if we insist on burning fires inside of wood instruments, occasionally those instruments will fail. Indeed, fire is only one part of the torture we subject our pipes to—the steam that results from tobacco combustion is just as damaging. Steam is used in bending wood furniture, after all. Think what it's doing to your briar. We are constantly heating and wetting our pipe bowls during a smoke, and then drying them out with the heat of the tobacco burning. It's no wonder that when a flaw lies just under the surface of the briar it can be fatal to a pipe. It is amazing that so few actually suffer the doom that you relate.

However, reputable manufacturers will replace pipes that have burned out under normal smoking conditions, as you know from your own experience. No bowl treatment is perfect.



Stanwell pipes

Stanwell makes quite a number of bamboo-shanked pipes for their high-end lines. Don't give up hope about acquiring another one. Ask your tobacconist to keep checking with Lane Limited, the company that distributes Stanwells.

In all fairness to J.T. Cooke, his own guarantee is based on his own bowl treat-

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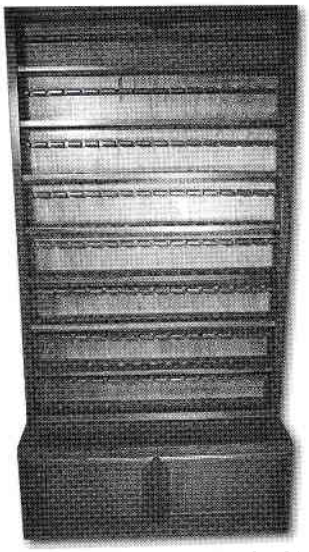

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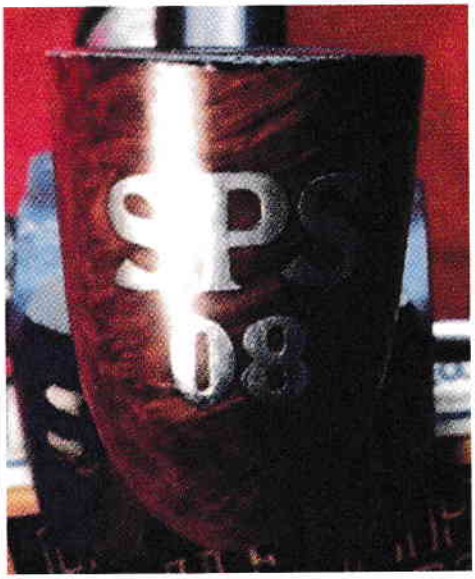
ment—not on the clay treatment of other manufacturers. Even so, it only guarantees that he will replace a burned-out pipe; not that it will never happen. And to his credit, Cooke has had only one pipe returned because of burnout in all his years as a carver. "It was a very large bent bulldog," he says, "a huge pipe. And when I cut it open to see why it had burned out, there was a pea-sized stone lodged inside the wall of the pipe." Obviously, flaws such as that are no one's fault. Still, good pipemakers will replace such pipes to maintain their professional reputations.

Pipe Identification

I have enclosed a photo of a silver-banded BBB pipe. It has silver markings on the front of the bowl that say SPS 08. This pipe was taken by an American officer from a captured German officer during WWII. The German officer told him that he had taken if off of a captured British officer, so the SPS 08 probably relates to either a British or German military outfit. I sure would like to know more about it.

Dr. Jim Lucie
Fruitport, Michigan

Frank Burla, noted antique tobacciana expert, kindly researched these markings. His letter is quoted below:



The easy answer to your inquiry would have been that the letters represented someone's name and date of birth, or that the letters represented the known letters of a European university and the year someone graduated. However, further research and collaboration with Dr. Frederico Baylaender, an antique pipe collector, revealed that there was another explanation which may be more plausible.

Because of the location where the pipe was obtained, it is believed that the letters SPS represent in some way a specific part of the German military, such as the Storm Panzer Staffel (SPS), with the 08 representing the symbol of the famous anti-aircraft weapon used by the Germans during World War II. German soldiers proudly referred to this weapon as the 08. This weapon was so successful and powerful that in many instances it was mounted on German tanks and used against the Allies in Africa and in Europe.

The anti-smokers solution

I'm looking for a particular kind of pipe I used to smoke in the late '60s. I loved that pipe, but I'm not sure if they are still being made.

They were standard issue for people in my line of work. I was a spy, you see, for the United States. We were given these pipes as part of our personal armament. They had no nomenclature, because they were especially made for the CIA, and of course were not meant to be traced. I don't know who did the manufacturing, though it may have been the combined effort of a pipe and a gun manufacturer.

They were straight billiards—they had to be straight, because they had a concealed barrel in the shank and stem that could fire a small needle. The needle was coated with a harmless drug that would enter the bloodstream of whomever was struck, and cause that person to become silent for about 40 minutes. They would just stare and smile, and keep their mouths shut. We used the pipes when negotiating with bad guys and someone in the group was being difficult, or seemed to suspect our identity. With these pipes, we could silence a person without any violent demonstrations that would alert others. You just had to bite down along the side of the mouthpiece to fire the needle.

They smoked great, and were mainly rusticated, though my chief had a nice straight grain. The mouthpieces were hand-carved of the finest materials, so that the firing mechanism would be flawless. I smoked

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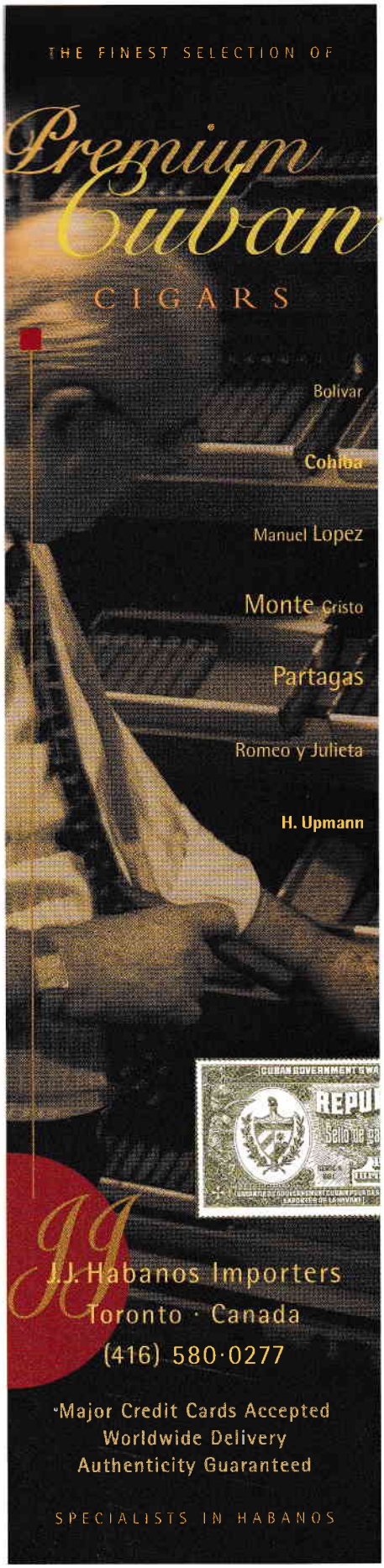

Half-and-Half in those days, and in those pipes it was the smoothest smoke you could imagine. You just had to be careful not to inhale a prepared needle.

Now I smoke fine English blends, and I think they would be even better in one of those pipes. It also seems to me that one of these pipes would be great when faced with an anti-smoker. If they want to give you a hard time about your smoking a pipe, just fire away and they'll leave you alone long enough to finish your bowl. There could be a big market in the current anti-smoking frenzy.

Is there any chance of finding one in a government auction? Have you ever run across one? Any idea if they're still being made? My son-in-law has been quoting smoking statistics to me lately, and I'd sure like to quiet him for a while.

Anonymous

I'm sure such a pipe would be popular in the open market these days, but I have been unable to find any information. The CIA won't even speak with me, and every other government agency I've contacted has disavowed any knowledge of this pipe. However, I strongly suspect that a similar, updated device is now in use by the government, because, thanks to you, I am now being followed. Everywhere I go there are clean-cut yuppie-looking guys lounging nearby, watching suspiciously as I smoke my pipe. They are undoubtedly ruthless government agents, ready to silence me with a tiny projectile. The scary part? They're smoking *cigars*.

Soapstone

I was wondering if you have any knowledge regarding the suitability of soapstone for making pipes. I am able to obtain excellent quality soapstone but would like some advice concerning its properties and how it compares to meerschaum.

Rick McLarty
Cyberspace

Soapstone is indeed used for pipemaking, though on a limited basis. A company called Mountain Pipes was selling them at last year's L.A. pipe show. They make the pipes in Native American styles, and use soapstone to bypass the religious objections that might result from using pipestone, or catlinite, which is held in high religious esteem by many American Indians.

I was told that soapstone provides an adequate smoking experience, but it is not as absorbent or cool-smoking as meerschaum or briar. However, I have not personally tried one of these pipes.

Pipes by Mountain Pipes

your patience is requested...

When this column was inaugurated last year, I introduced myself as "just a guy who smokes a pipe." Well, that hasn't changed. I'm no smarter now than I was then, though I have picked up some basics: I can light my pipe seven times out of 10 without setting myself on fire; I can often tell the difference between a meerschaum pipe and a station wagon; I've learned not to clean my pipes with a garden hose and toilet brush. But my expertise ends there.

That is to say, I don't know the answers to most of the questions sent in. What I do is hunt down the people who do know, and then coax, bribe or blackmail the information out of them. That takes time, not to mention tranquilizer darts. I'm still carrying questions submitted last year with me to pipe shows, foraging for those pipe scholars who can provide the information requested. So please be patient.

Also please bear in mind that, for practicality's sake—and because I've switched to decaf—your questions can be answered only within the confines of this column. Here they will benefit the magazine's entire readership. The volume of questions, to the credit of the growing hobby of pipe smoking and collecting, has become enormous. I read every one. Please keep sending them, but watch here for the replies.

Chuck

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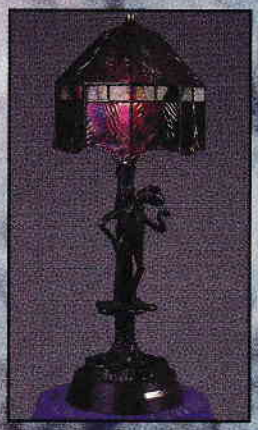

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Meerschaum

Two Turkish brothers, both expert carvers, demonstrate the making of meerschaum pipes, from the mine to the finished products

by Dayton H. Matlick

Part I: Into the depths

The dusty green Mazda 323 follows the Nissan sedan down into the ditch to the left, across the rocks and climbs slowly onto the arid field. It crosses shallow ditches carefully, its driver wary of puncturing its pan many miles from the nearest parts and mechanics.

The Mazda labors carefully up a slight hill, lost among other, taller hills. Small bushes are the tallest vegetation on the rock-strewn surface. At the top of the rise, the car stops with a wheeze and we all—slowly and deliberately—get out and stretch, each in his or her own way. It feels good!

The hills slope downward toward flat plains about a mile or two away. All around us are piles of dirt shaped into tapered mounds, as though giant, ghost crab aliens had invaded. One, two, three, four...100...300...too many to count.

This land, near the Turkish village of Margi, has been the site of some of the best meerschaum in the world for centuries. To put things into perspective, flying from the East Coast of the U.S. to Turkey passes through seven time zones and takes about 10 hours in the air. The plane lands in Istanbul, the largest city in the country, located in the northwestern corner. A harrowing cab ride delivers you to a bus station and onto a modern, comfortable bus for the six-hour ride to Eskisehir, the main city in the meerschaum area. A car covers the last 14 miles to the village.

Some say meerschaum has been mined near Margi for 300-plus years; others insist it has been at least 400 years. For most of that time, the land was owned and mined by a German firm, with time out for World War I.

Miners from miles around dug out the "white gold" for shipment to Vienna and Germany. There it was carved into pipes, statues and pieces of whimsy. Some workers even came from neighboring countries. At the mine's peak, thousands of miners climbed down primitive shafts in search of the illusive soft, white mineral called meerschaum or "sea foam" by the Germans.

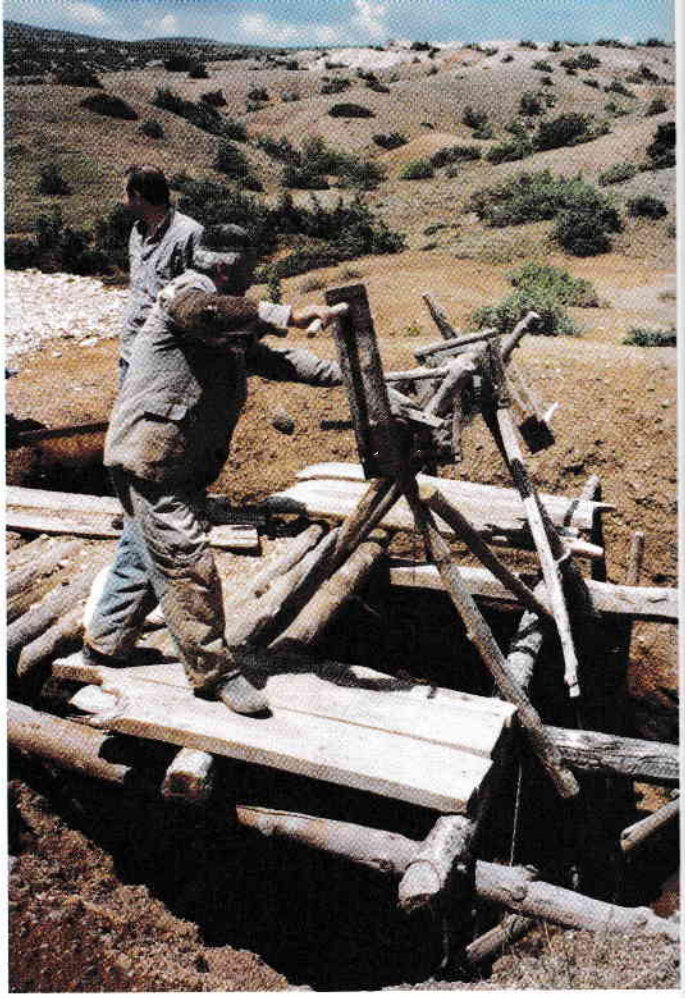
Then, in 1970, the Turkish government, with urging from people at all levels of the country, passed a law that forbade the exportation of raw meerschaum from the country. The result was the abandonment of the mines by the German firm. The land reverted to the national government, which today allows individuals to mine the fields without charge—and basically without regulation.

Turkey was and still is the world's primary source of high-quality, white meerschaum. And this land produces some of the best of the best. As I look across mine tailings as far as I can see, I wonder aloud if there is enough meerschaum left to supply the world's demand.

"Yes, of course," says Tekin Uzkesici (Oozeket'-a-see), an exporter of fine meerschaum pipes. "See that low land in the distance? It is very wet

Turkey is the world's source for high-quality, pure white meerschaum.

With hills at its back and plains in the distance, the small village of Margi is famous for its meerschaum and its carvers. At the mines, resources are scarce. Items such as this windlass are made from scrub trees.



there. And where it is wet, the best meerschaum is found. It has been estimated that the wet lands hold much more meerschaum than has already been dug out here over the years. And it will be of very high quality!"

Our little group walks across the hills to a small evergreen tree, about four feet tall. Two miners—Şaban Önalici and Şadi Güler—share its meager shade while taking a tea break. They get up, and the next few minutes are taken by everyone shaking hands with them. They welcome us and escort us down the hill toward the mine they are currently working.

Most mining injuries occur during trips up and down primitive shafts.

We pass several other mine openings on the way. At each we stop and look in, unable to see more than 20 feet down the dark shaft. And each time, someone ritualistically picks up a rock and heaves it into the hole. We all hold our breath and try to count the number of seconds before it hits bottom. One particular shaft leads to the story about a sheep that fell into it. The ewe had been missing for weeks before it was found and pulled out—thin, but in good health otherwise. Having grown up on a farm in the U.S., I can appreciate a shaggy dog (or, in this case, sheep) story when I hear it.

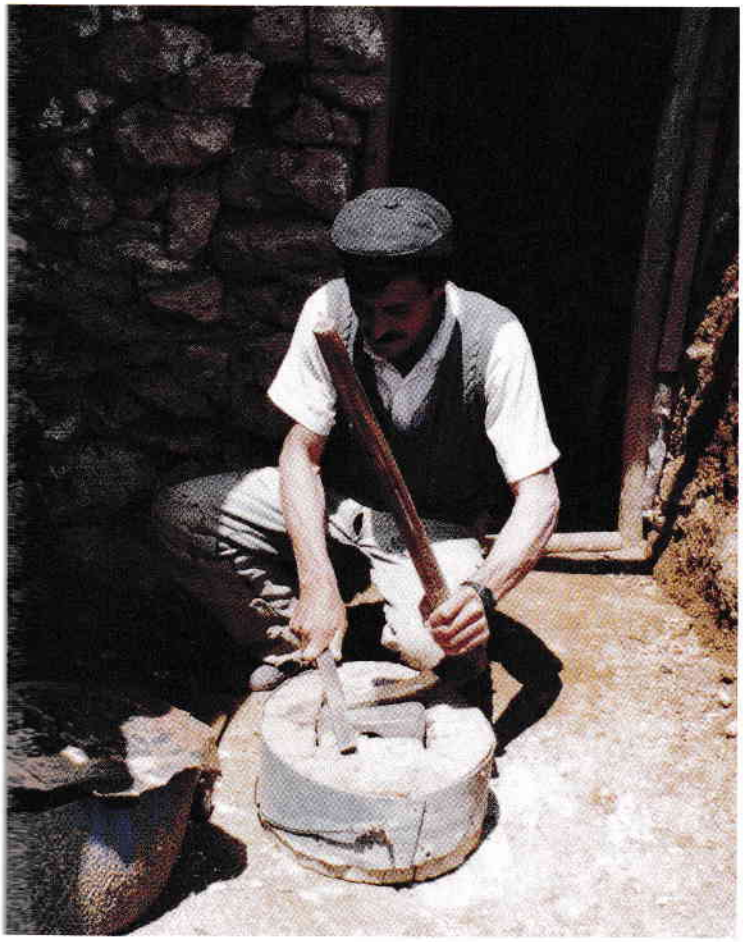
When we reach the mine being worked, there is a "tea house" cut into the side of the hill, its roof covered with dirt. In bad weather, when the miners emerge from the ground two or three times a day, they huddle in the shelter to brew their tea, eat their food and sharpen their picks, made dull by the hard ground and rocks below. The other main function of the hut is to protect essential supplies from the elements.

After verifying that the American journalist and big city meerschaum pipe exporter are serious in their desire to climb down into the mine, the trip begins.

The shaft measures about 3 to 4 feet across one way and 5 to 6 feet the other. Across the top is a wooden platform upon which is mounted a reel made of small tree trunks, turned by a hand crank. Attached is a slender steel cable that dangles down the shaft.

The first challenge is ducking under the platform and climbing down the ladder made of more sapling trunks. An even bigger challenge is getting down from this level into the actual shaft. Up to this point the ground has been conical, sloping steeply toward the shaft.

The miners explain that the way down consists of holes cut in the shaft wall, into which toes and elbows are thrust. It is with relief that I finally find myself situated at the top without falling down the shaft in the process. The relief is quickly followed by concern. I am poised at the top of a shaft that descends straight down, without a resting place, for more than 150 feet, half the length of a football field. The only things that



Tools are resharpend again and again, after becoming dull from impact with the rock-studded earth. Cave-ins are infrequent in the hard soil, even though support timbers are rare.

could break my fall are the two miners who have preceded me down the dark shaft. The light from their small kerosene lanterns gives some idea of the "opportunity" to which I have committed myself.

The trip down into darkness is slow and steady. Time and again when I can't find a foothold, the miner below me lifts his head until the light from his lantern reveals the next hole. The thin cable extending into the depths provides a source of balance. I have absolutely no idea how long it takes to climb down the 15- to 16-story equivalent depth, but it seems short. By the time I begin to get a feel for the odd weight shifts, we reach the bottom. For some odd reason, a memory from many years ago pops into my head—that of a toy clown that waddles back and forth as it moves from the top to the bottom of a ladder.

A pile of mine tailings blocks half the entrance to the lateral tunnel. Scrambling over the rocky pile puts us into a tunnel measuring about 5 feet wide and 5 feet tall. Walking bent over, we wade through a layer of liquid mud. Rain from the night before has run down the shaft and into the tunnel.

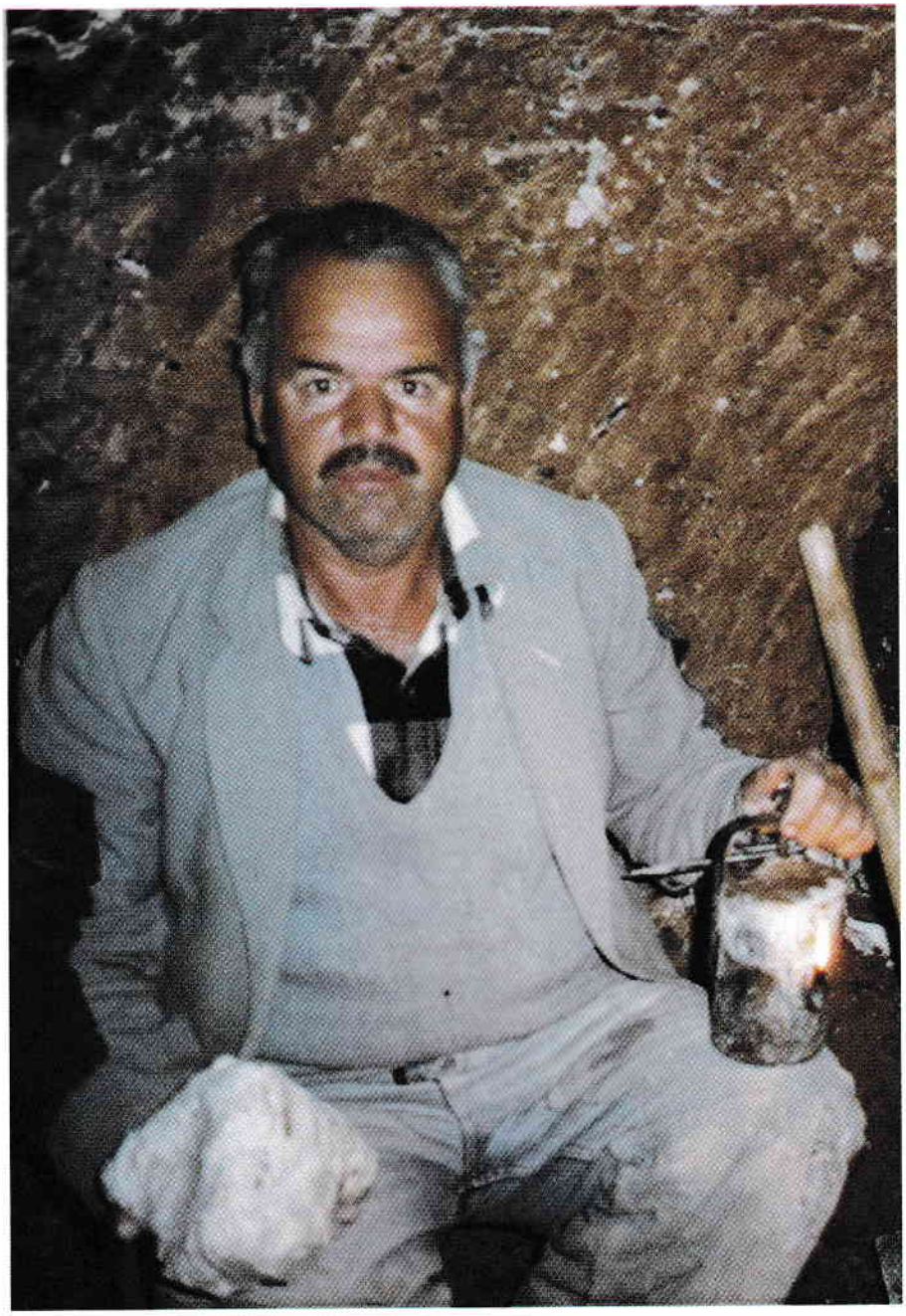
Farther back into the tunnel, the slender but wiry Şadi Güler gets into position and begins to use his pick on the hard wall, chipping away the rock-studded surface in search of meerschaum. In the old days, large pieces of the prized mineral were found on a regular basis. This is no longer true. Most pieces today are about the size needed to produce one to three pipes. A one-pipe piece will bring about $10 at the evening sale in the village. The sale is on Thursday evening because Friday is a holy day in the rural areas of Islamic Turkey.

All prices are based on the one-pipe block price. For example, a piece from which 10 pipes can be made is worth $100. Most of the arguments between miners and carvers buying the stone are about exactly how many pipes can be made from each piece.

After a good week, a team of miners may have several pieces of meerschaum for sale. The proceeds are split among the team members. Then there are the days—sometimes weeks—when hard work produces nothing to sell. The frustrating part is that they may be only a few feet from a whole new lode of meerschaum, but in which direction?

Just beyond where Şadi is working, a shaft drops down another 10 feet in the continuing search for the rare "white gold." In Turkish, the word for meerschaum is *luletasi* (loo-let'-a-seer).

After watching the miner chip away at the hard earth for several minutes, we move back toward the original shaft where the tunnel is a little wider to watch the Şaban Önalici work. Stocky and thick-bodied from years of labor, he takes off



Şaban Önalici displays the fruit of his labor—a good-sized chunk of meerschaum. The light from the camera's flash is much stronger than the normal working conditions, shown on the opposite page.

his outer shirt and hangs it on a nearby hook. His small miner's lamp with its open flame hangs on the wall, casting its meager light on the work surface.

He levels the rocks on the floor and then kneels on them to begin his work. The pick hits the rocky surface with a ping. Again and again the sound of the pick rings in the tunnel. When he reaches his rhythm, the pick strikes the wall about 25 times a minute. It takes force to penetrate the hard, packed, rocky surface. As he labors, silhouetted against the light of the lantern, I can soon see the steam begin to rise from his body.

Minute after minute goes by with the metronome regularity of the two picks, each with its own speed, ringing through the tunnel. Then, the stocky miner uncovers a small piece of meerschaum. With care he explores around the piece to determine its size and shape. Then the speed of the strikes picks up momentum, fueled by the excitement of the chase. It turns out to be big enough for only a small pipe, but it is meerschaum and the hunt is on. After 15 more minutes of steady work, another piece is found, this one bigger. The miner decides the American journalist is good luck. It is unusual to find two pieces in such a short time.

The chunk of meerschaum feels cool and damp, its surface rough and discolored, hiding the pure white interior.

As he works to remove the new piece, suddenly the lantern flares...and goes out. Several cigarette lighters immediately flick on in the thick blackness. Obviously the visitors are not quite comfortable in the blackness of the mine! A piece of thread from the miner's jacket is wrapped around the metal thread that holds the lantern's nozzle. It solves the problem by functioning as a gasket, and he is soon back at work. The new piece of meerschaum is removed and added to the small collection.

With this success as an excuse, the decision is made to return to the surface. Strangely enough, the climb back up is not as hard as anticipated, probably because it is easier to find the footholds on the way back up. Also, because I have learned to use my elbows to support my weight as I grope for each new foot placement. Fortunately, the camera, flashes and meerschaum come up in the container fastened to the cable, not as added weight in my pockets.

During the winter months, four or five miners work this mine as a team, taking turns picking at the hard, rocky soil, hauling tailings and meerschaum to the base of the shaft, and lifting both the tailings and the small amounts of meerschaum to the surface. During the growing season, all but two return to nearby farms to grow crops to supplement their incomes and to feed their families.

Mining and meerschaum carving are the principal sources of income for the village, with growing crops or herding sheep and/or goats being two of the few other options available. An average farmer blessed with average weather can earn $2,000 a year. The same is true for an average miner blessed with average luck at finding the elusive white stone. However, combining farming and mining can increase annual family earnings by 50 percent or more.

After the mine adventure, the Emin brothers, who had arranged the trip, take us back to Margi and their homes. Both expert carvers, each in a different style, they explain that after refreshments they will show me the steps necessary to turn the chunk of meerschaum dug out of the mine into a pipe. *P&T*

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

Victor Miller took a giant step toward fame and fortune when he created Jason and

Friday the 13th

by Larry O'Connor

Emmy Award-winning writer Victor Miller likes to see the look on people's faces when they discover his monstrous literary past. No, not those six Kojak novelizations he wrote in the 1970s to keep his family fed. Not the paperback romance novels that he now figures were just the publisher's way of filling shelf space at the A&P. Not even the screenplay for "Here Come The Tigers," which he admits was a shameless rip-off of "Bad News Bears."

No. What horrifies the guests at a cocktail party is finding out that this urbane, easygoing pipe smoker is the demented soul who created the ghoulish movie "Friday the 13th" and unleashed the murderous Jason on an unsuspecting public.

"I must have prayed to my Higher Power and asked him to make me a famous writer—but I guess I forgot to specify which genre," jokes the 58-year-old Miller.

"I must have prayed to my higher power and asked him to make me a famous writer—but I guess I forgot to specify which genre."

For the uninitiated, "Friday the 13th" is the story of the reopening of a summer youth camp some 20 years after the gruesome murder of two teenage counselors. As "Friday the 13th" unfolds, Crystal Lake Camp's debaucherous young staff members are picked off, one by one, by an unseen villain with a nasty array of murder techniques.

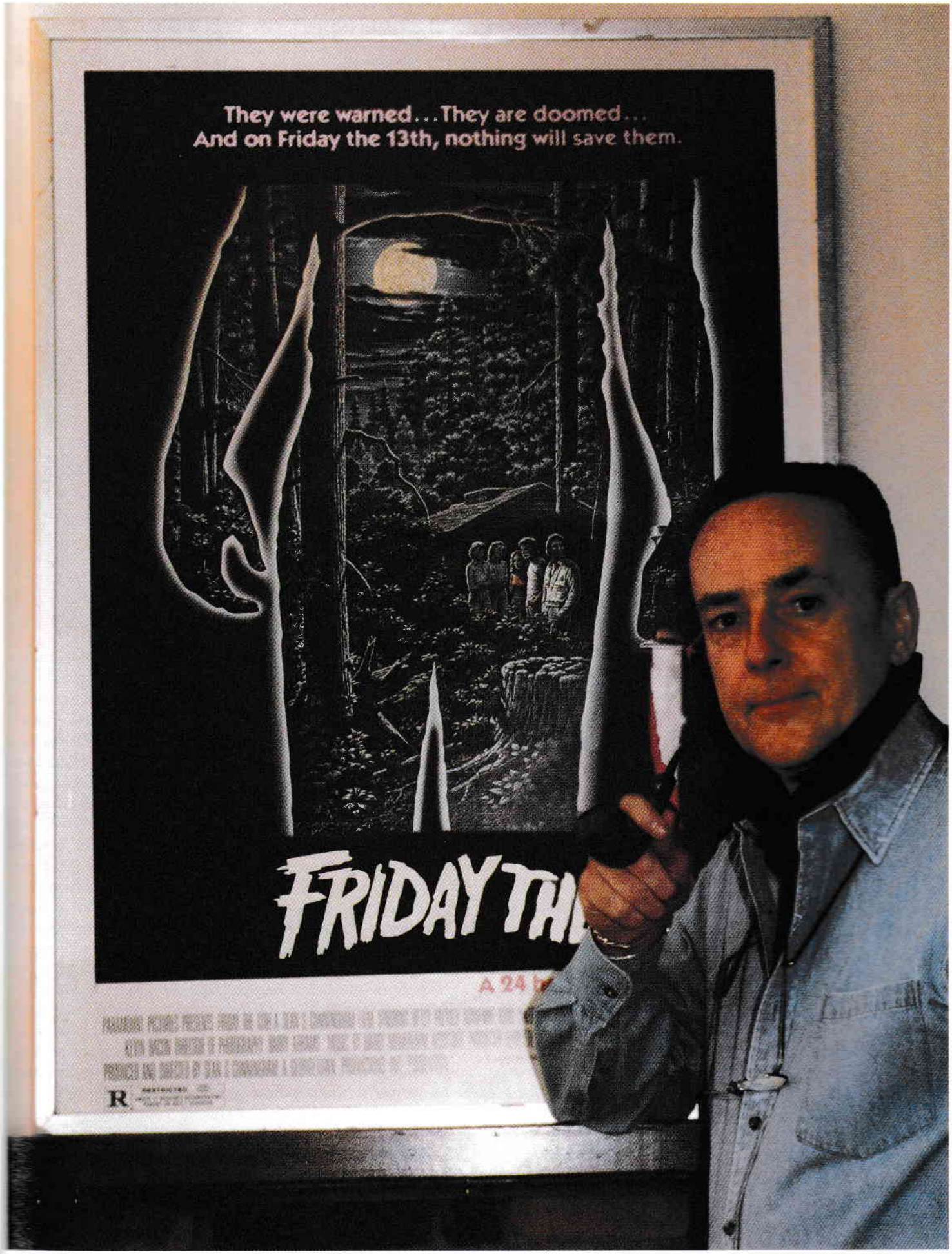
In one of the movie's more memorable scenes—and the only one Miller saw being filmed—a young Kevin Bacon's throat is perforated with an arrow as he reclines on a cot after an illicit rendezvous with a nubile fellow counselor.

"When I was a little kid, I was always afraid somebody was under my bed, so I said, 'In this movie, somebody is going to be under his [Bacon's] bed.' Of course, what happens to him is physically impossible. The arrow would have had to be jammed up through the mattress, through the innerspring and through his spine...but it sure looked good," Miller jokes.

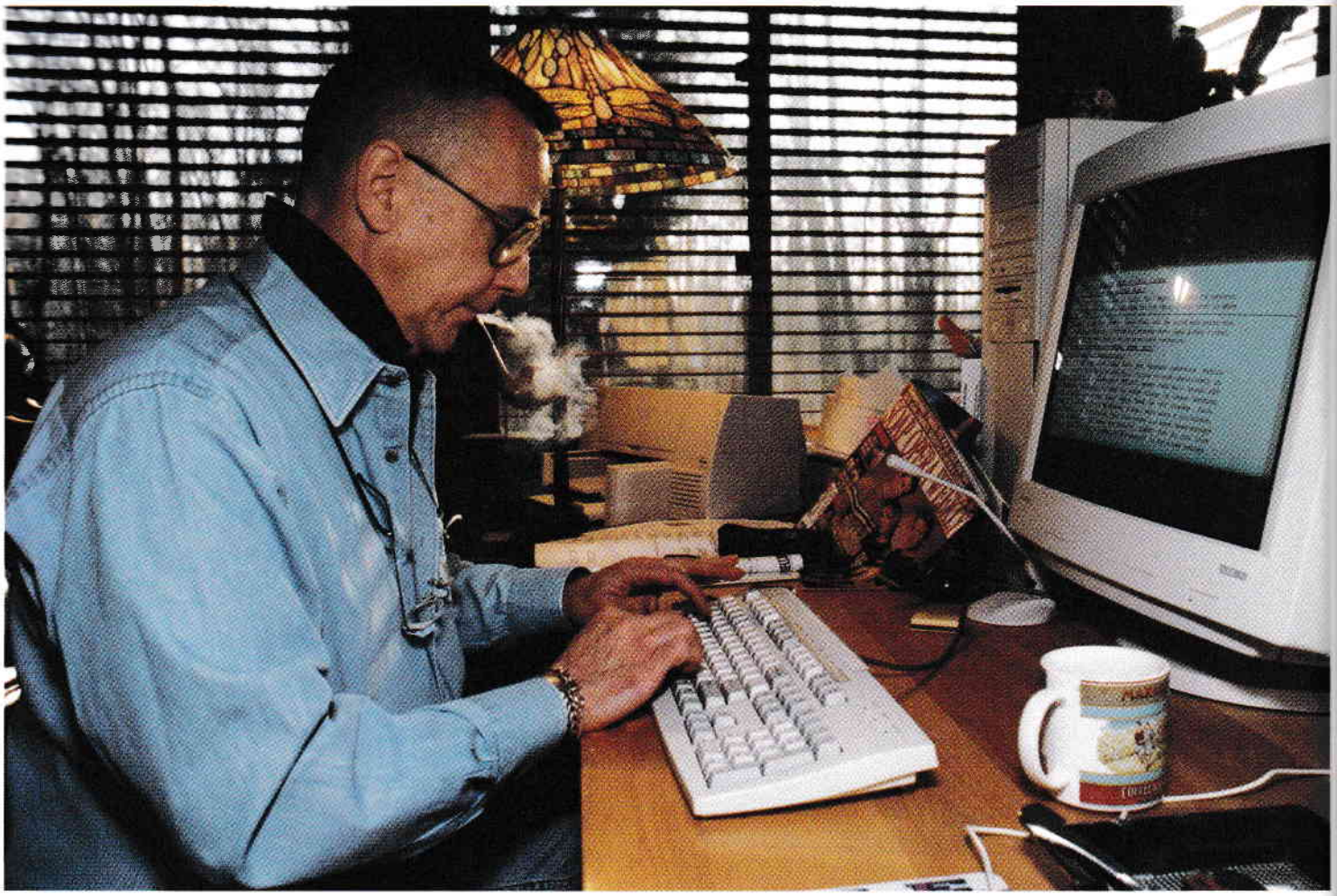
The success of "Friday the 13th" brought the then-struggling writer not only a measure of financial security but also credibility within the entertainment industry. And Miller parlayed his newfound name recognition into 15 years of steady employment on the TV soap opera circuit.

The New Orleans-born writer has won two Emmies for his work on the long-running "All My Children," but makes no claims that "Friday the 13th" was anything other than a calculated effort to cash in on filmgoers' thirst for so-called slasher films, a phenomenon that began with the likes of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" (1974) and reached boiling point in 1978 with "Halloween."

"They [slasher films] came into the culture, and they stuck by mistake, by some horrible accident of fate," quips the writer. Miller would actually prefer to be known for having written a slap-



Photos by Jean Santopatre



"I must have looked insane—a 13-year-old kid going around smoking a monkey's head."

stick comedy like "Airplane," which more neatly fits what he calls his "somewhat goofy" sense of humor. But the writer is still proud of what he and producer Sean Cunningham accomplished with "Friday the 13th."

"We set out to put together a really good roller coaster ride—that is Sean's term—and I think that's what we did. And over the years I think it has stood up very well. It doesn't pretend to explain the meaning of existence, but it is a very good roller coaster ride," he says.

"Friday the 13th" was produced for $800,000, a paltry sum by Hollywood standards. Not surprisingly, it appears to have been shot in a hurry and the film is somewhat grainy. But while the questionable production quality would be a drawback for most movies, it lends a strange charm to "Friday the 13th," which earned some $78 million. "Not a bad return on your money," the writer opines.

Miller penned only the original "Friday the 13th," not its seven sequels (although as the story's creator he gets paid a fee for each new episode). And Miller's Jason never dons the infamous hockey mask with which he is usually associated.

In fact, Jason doesn't even show up in the original until the final scene, and even then only in a dream sequence. In an unintentional twist on Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho," Miller's villain is actually Jason's mother, who blames the drowning of her son 20 years earlier on the camp's irresponsible counselors. While Norman Bates takes on his own mother's personality in "Psycho," the long-departed Jason speaks through his mother, encouraging her less-than-hospitable reception for the new camp counselors—"Kill them, Mommy. Kill them!"

"I think what makes 'Friday the 13th' unique is that I took Mom and apple pie—and put a carving knife in her hand," Miller observes wryly.

Miller grew up for the most part on Long Island. His father, a former navy ship commander who later worked as a broker on the cotton exchange in New York City, smoked a pipe. And Miller got his first pipe at 13, via an ad in the *New York Herald Tribune*, for $8 from the Wally Frank Company. It was a large briar carved in the shape of a chimpanzee's head, with red plastic eyeballs and a wind cap shaped like the hat of an organ grinder's monkey.

"If you had the hat on, you could smoke it outdoors, and the smoke came out of the monkey's ears," recalls Miller. "I must have looked insane—a 13-year-old kid going around smoking a monkey's head."

Like everything else he owned in 1953, the monkey's head is long gone, says Miller. And it

wasn't until he entered Yale University several years later that he took up pipe smoking in earnest. "Obviously, as a freshman at Yale, I had to smoke a pipe," says Miller.

Early on, Miller made every possible pipe-smoking error, including, he says, believing the rumor that women fell for guys who smoked very aromatic tobacco. "I remember going into the Owl Shop [in New Haven, Connecticut] and asking if I could have 100 percent pure aromatic tobacco. The guy looked at me rather oddly and said, 'You certainly may.' It was the worst, just a terrible mixture."

By the time he graduated in 1962, Miller had settled on Balkan Sobrannie, which he found "absolutely fabulous." But Miller says his colleagues at the advertising agency where he had gone to work were less thrilled with the aroma emanating from his office. "People would say, 'What died?' or 'What are you doing in there?'" he recalls.

Miller found that he caught less flak when he smoked cigarettes and switched to cigarettes, although he continued smoking pipes off and on for the next dozen years or so. He quit smoking altogether in the '70s, and it wasn't until the cigar boom hit in the early '90s that Miller came back to tobacco. While it was the cigars that lured him back, he says, and he still smokes cigars occasionally, he very quickly returned to pipes.

Miller lives in Trumbull, Connecticut, (a town he describes as not unlike the idyllic Pine Valley of "All My Children") with Tina, his accountant and wife of 35 years, in a nice suburban home with a glassed-in porch overlooking the woods. "Couldn't be nicer, three dogs, one wife, empty nest," says Miller.

Once a week, he makes the hourlong train ride to New York City, where "All My Children" is shot, for a meeting of the program's writers. Smoking is *verboten* at the studio. But, for the most part, Miller works at home where no one complains, except his computer. "And that's all right. I can always buy another one," he says.

Trumbull is close to New Haven, so once again he's visiting the tobacconist of his college days. "I miss the fact that Balkan Sobrannie is not the same, but the people at the Owl Shop are, so it's been fun going there," he says.

Nowadays he smokes the establishment's St. John's Blend, as well as a variety of Dunhill mixtures. He's also fond of Royal Ransom, another English blend that he discovered at Drucquer & Sons Ltd. in Berkeley, California, where Miller's two sons, Josh and Ian, live.

"The shop was mixing that day so I got to see an entire sheet of Latakia before it was folded in, and it was just like I was in heaven.... I sample stuff everywhere I go, I look up the tobacco stores a city has and just wander through like a kid in a candy store," he says.

As for pipes, Miller calls himself a creature of the Internet. "It's really opened up the whole thing for me. I go to everybody's Web site and drool."

Miller owns about 20 pipes. His "work horses" include two Ser Jacopo apples, a standard-sized quarter bent and another he calls "the big fatty." The Ser Jacopos are too heavy to hold in his mouth while he types. So, when working, he smokes lighter-weight pipes, such as the estate Dunhill he picked up at a show for $100—a straight pot, circa 1964.

He is also a big fan of pipemaker Mark Tinsky, who has made several of Miller's pipes, including two custom pieces. One is what the writer describes as an "obscenely large" squat bulldog. "I am from the school that more is better. I've never been able to master that other, middle ground," he says.

The other custom pipe, designed jointly by Tinsky and Miller, and dubbed the "North American Kiseru," is a long, squat bulldog, modeled after a Japanese pipe Miller saw in *P&T*. "I wanted it for those special times when pipe smoking is all you're going to be doing—just meditating and watching the smoke curl up," Miller says.

Actually, it's those special, peaceful moments alone, serenely puffing on his pipe, that draw Miller to the pastime. "It's just so mellow. I don't think I could smoke a pipe and be hyper at the same time," he says.

So maybe ol' Jason should have given pipe-smoking a whirl? "Yes, I would think if he'd had a nice Sherlock Holmes with a good oriental mixture, he might have been a much, much nicer person." *P&T*

Brethren of the Briar

by Jim Chilcote

They met at 55 Grafton Street,
not far from St. Stephanie Green.
And a likelier set of fellows
you've likely never seen.

They were bound in timeless brotherhood
by wood and wind and fire.
'Twas the grand Olde Reunion of
the Brethren of the Briar.

There was Bacon, Byron, Emerson, Lamb,
Einstein and old Sinclair.
There was Kipling, Pershing, von Blücher and Jung.
Even Holmes and Watson were there.

There were Lords and Knights and Gents and Bards,
and Veterans of the late Great War.
But nary a rogue strode through those doors,
of that you can be sure.

The table was laid with the finest fare,
'twas a feast fit for a King.
And since Kings Edward and George were there,
'twould seem 'twas a jolly good thing.

"'Tis a damned good show Charles Peterson,
stand up and take a bow!"
Said Samuel Clemens with a moustached grin
from beneath his hoary brow.

They wined and dined for Auld Lang Syne,
and toasted days of yore.
"Long live Lady N!" said Tennyson,
"and pass the humidor!"

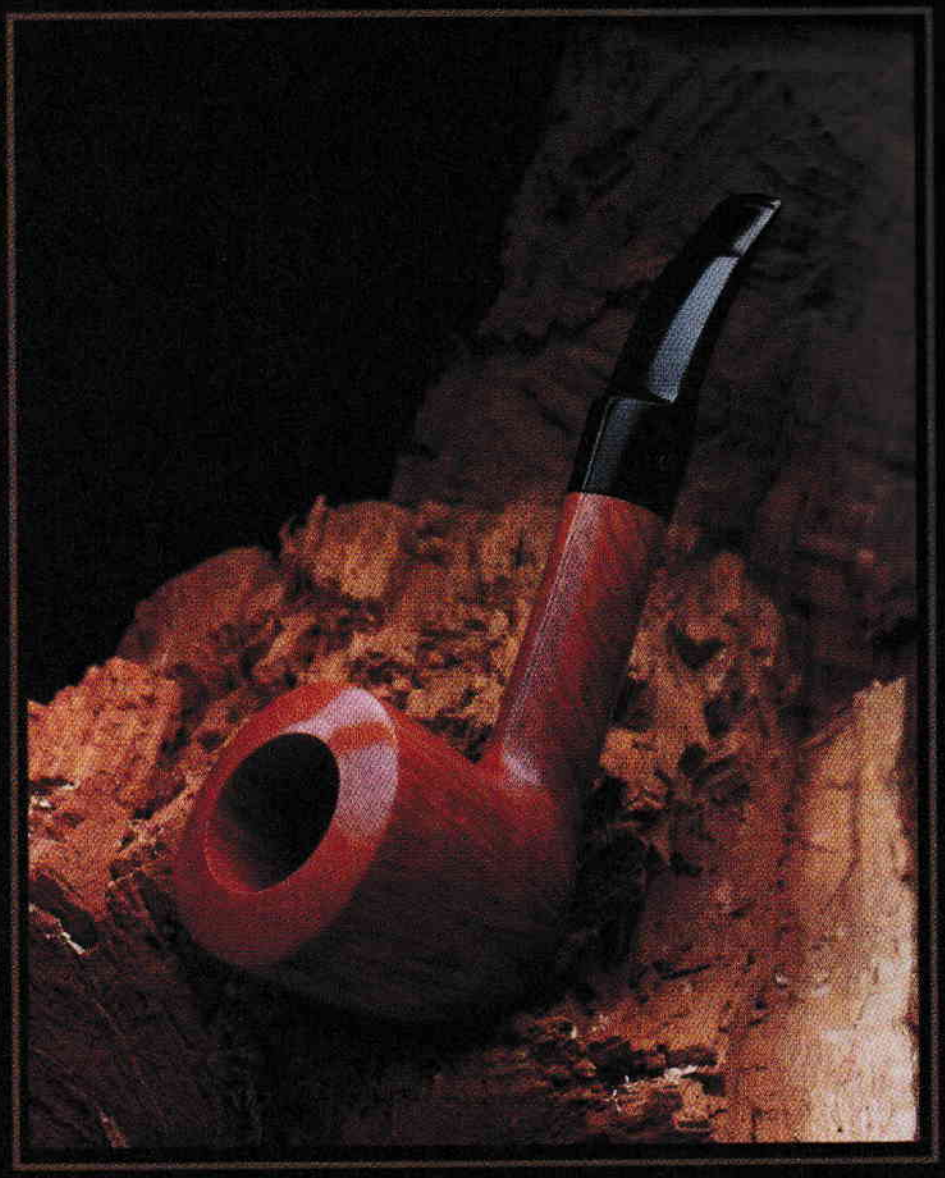
Now the humidor of the Brethren
was the most splendid one by far.
For every tobacco loved by man
could be got from that selfsame jar.

As it made its rounds from place to place,
and each man filled his pipe,
Sir Walter Raleigh, moved to speak, said,
"Gentlemen, let us light!"

Then wisps of Bright Virginia,
Latakia and Perique
rose from those venerable briars,
while nary a man did speak.

And a glorious cloud settled over the crowd,
as rapt as a fragrant hue,
the Brethren of the Briar
slowly faded from view.

They were bound in timeless brotherhood,
by wood and wind and fire.
And no pipesman yet shall e'er forget,
the Brethren of the Briar.



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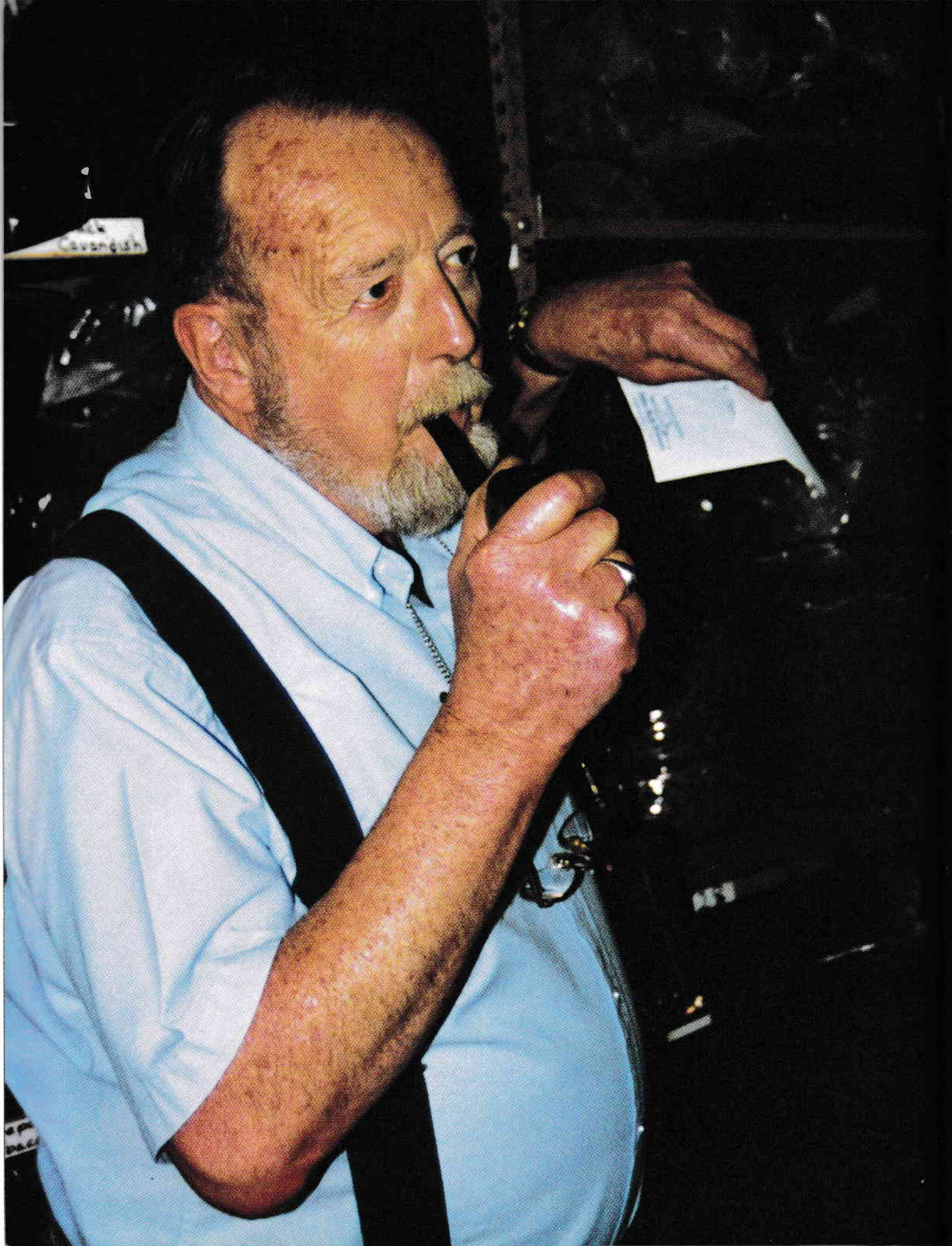


Size isn't everything

Cornell & Diehl goes into the big time with effective blending and a keen grasp of marketing

by Chuck Stantion

If enthusiasm were tobacco, Craig Tarler would have more than he could smoke.

Wait—he does have more than he can smoke, because he owns a tobacco blending company. But that just proves the point: Husband-and-wife team Craig and Patty Tarler have turned their natural enthusiasm for everything—a quality that makes being around them an exhilarating experience—into a thriving tobacco enterprise. And the blends they distribute through Cornell & Diehl Inc. are becoming some of the most popular in the United States—with Europe and the rest of the world now taking notice as well.

But the company really started as something this vibrant couple chose to invigorate their retirement years. "It's more than achieved its original purpose," says Tarler. "This is retirement? We're barely able to keep up with the business!"

The company not only blends tobaccos; its name is itself a blend. It is derived from Craig's middle name and Patty's maiden name.

Patty Tarler takes care of most of the phone orders and bookkeeping, always projecting the energy of 10 women with a unique effervescence that enlivens those around her. At pipe shows people speak with her and leave the Cornell & Diehl table transfused with optimism and an attitude of buoyant goodwill. Patty has a genuinely high regard for pipe smokers. "I'll bet you the average educational and intelligence level of pipe smokers," she says, "is higher than in the general population. Part of what makes this so fun is that the customers are all—well, the majority; we have a few duds, like in anything—but most are so erudite that you can talk with them about anything. Politics, economics, tobacco, all the important topics. What wonderful, stimulating people."

Cornell & Diehl is the latest in a very long list of successful ventures that Tarler has developed over the last 40 years. He's a capable man, with a long career in public relations (quite evident in his highly polished social skills, as anyone who has spoken with him can attest), among other pursuits.

"I worked in New York for three or four agencies," says Tarler. "N.W. Ayer, Selvage, Lee & Howard...I just about lived on airplanes, maybe 150 trips a year." He once found himself responsible for transporting the entire United Nations to Montreal for a special assembly regarding anti-hijacking treaties. "I got the call in Dallas, and I only had 10 days to pull it off," he says. "Now that was an exercise in organization and security."

Tarler was the chief spokesman for the copper industry during the nationwide copper strike of 1968-69. He later built a horse farm, for a change of pace, and "I lost my butt in horses." After the horse farm, he started a biological business, bleeding sheep. "They used the blood in hospitals for lab work—it was a sort of bloodmobile, going around harvesting blood from sheep." He laughs. "We called it Lampire Enterprises. But it's now Lampire Biological Laboratories and a major factor in the market." After that he started in marketing consulting. "I formed a company called Market-Trak, and did a lot of consulting with business-to-business telephone marketing." In 1989 he accepted a consulting job, with the title of vice president of marketing, for an office products distributor.

It was the next year that his life turned toward the tobacco industry.

"In May of 1990 Patty and I planned a long-awaited trip to England," explains Tarler. "I quit smoking cigarettes that year—I got a clean bill of health from my doctor and decided to keep it that way—and picked up the pipe again. I'd been a lifetime on-again-off-again pipe smoker,

The components of #531, Yale Mixture, above, are ready to be blended. Tarler humidifies a 20-pound batch (opposite page) with distilled water.

and I never looked back. No more cigarettes."

He phoned the company he had been accustomed to buying pipe tobacco from. While taking Tarler's order, the owner mentioned that the company was for sale. It was an auspicious coincidence. "Shortly thereafter my employers took me to lunch. It was just two days before our trip to England," says Tarler, "and for dessert they said, 'Don't come back.'" Tarler laughs about it now. "I was downsized!"

Anyone else would have taken the opportunity to retire, maybe do some full-time fishing and smoking. Not Tarler. "All the while I was in England I was thinking about that blending company and wondering about how I might scrape up the necessary cash. When I got back I made a business plan, and we managed to buy the company." It was called Amar Blending, the same company that had bought Atlas Blending. He renamed it Cornell & Diehl.

You may be wondering exactly what one gets when one buys a tobacco blending company.

"OK, I got some tobacco," says Tarler, "which was an advantage. I got some wholesale and some retail customers. And I got a batch of blend recipes...and some flavors...oh yeah, and about a half-day's instruction." The company wasn't in perfect fiscal shape, and its assets were somewhat run-down. "I went in a van and picked it up." The whole company in the back of a van. "With my marketing background I was ready to make changes. I went to an old-fashioned typeface on the letterhead to make it look like it had been around forever, and started off."

Cornell & Diehl began with about 50 wholesale accounts and fewer than 100 retail customers. Since Amar Blending hadn't had a new customer for many years, most of the clients the Tarlers inherited had smoked the same blend for up to 40 or 50 years. Patty referred to a few of them as "Craig's geriatric outreach."

The small company offered quite a marketing challenge, "but I felt there was room in the business to sell factory-direct to people," says Tarler. "To have an honest product with no additives, except in the aromatics, of course."

In 1994 the Tarlers moved themselves and their company to Morganton, North Carolina, from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to be near their daughter, son-in-law and granddaughters.

And in 1995, Tarler's recognition of the Internet as a marketing bonanza started bringing Cornell & Diehl its prevailing success. "I went on the Internet in July of 1995, and the response was fantastic. Today I have national and worldwide recognition—orders from Taiwan, Australia, Finland, Japan, Canada, Europe, South America and Southeast Asia...over 1,500 retail customers and 130 wholesale accounts worldwide." While Cornell & Diehl caters to both wholesale accounts and individuals, Tarler protects the businesses he supplies in three ways: "I always refer callers to whatever shop in their area carries our blends," he says, "and I only sell by the pound, so people have to go to their tobacconist for smaller amounts. Also, if someone wants to purchase tins, I sell at retail price plus shipping, so it's cheaper to buy from a shop than from me."

Cornell & Diehl is currently garnering about one wholesale account per week and three new retail customers per day, "and 90 percent of them are from the Internet."

"Without the Internet," says Tarler, gesturing around him, "I would not have all this."

He says this in a self-deprecating tone, always revealing his good humor and amused incredulity over his success. He is standing in his shop, which is connected to the Tarler home in Morganton. It is no larger than an average two-car garage. Down the center of the room are metal shelves lined with 5-pound bags of tobacco. Along one wall is the blending table. Other shelves hold the flavoring agents for aromatic blends; still others hold bags of C&D blends. The 12-ton hydraulic press used for pressing tobacco sits near the back door, near the corner workstation of Barry Rupert, a recent addition to the C&D staff.

"Barry works part-time, and he's proven to be a terrific asset," says Tarler. A retired firefighter, Rupert is comfortable around smoke. He is responsible for developing some of C&D's new packaging techniques that are proving so efficient, including the process for vacuum-sealing and tinning blends.

"It isn't much," says Rupert. No one in this company seems to think they are doing anything much, though its customers would disagree. But Rupert simply reports his own innovations with the same bemused humor as displayed by the Tarlers.

The tins he prepares are filled with 50 or 100 grams of tobacco, evacuated and sealed in plastic. It does seem awfully simple—there is no NASA-level machinery at work here; or if there is, we should look pretty hard at NASA. "I just use a hamburger press," demonstrates Rupert, "press the air out of the bag and seal the plastic. Then I wrap plastic around the circumference of the tin and seal it with a commercial dryer mounted on this pivot."

"It's incredibly simple," laughs Tarler.

"But the important principle is: It works."

Rupert is the only real employee that Craig and Patty Tarler have ("He's more like family," says Patty), but Charlie Price, president/owner of Tobacco Services Inc., is also integral to their success. "Good communication between a blender and his tobacco processing company is essential," says Tarler. "Charlie does a hell of a job keeping the tobacco consistent. Consistency is paramount. When a guy gets a pound of Pirate Kake this week, it's got to be the same as the one he got a year ago."

Price concurs. "Sometimes it's not easy," he says. "But you can adjust for seasonal changes if you know what you're doing." He's standing across the blending room from Tarler, leaning easily against a counter. The working relationship they share has obviously made them good friends. Both are tall, imposing men who laugh often and sometimes finish each other's thoughts, Tarler with his singularly deep resonant voice, and Price with his melodious, low, rumbling Southern drawl. These men are not tenors; their conversation could be recorded with a seismograph.

"Tobacco crops change from year to year," says Price, "but the grades don't. So we can keep the tobacco quality consistent by using the same grades. Still, it's not a simple thing here—it's not rocket science, but it's not simple. On a tobacco plant, each individual leaf is on the same stalk. The very same stalk, the same tobacco. But each leaf is different, and it gets graded differently. It has a different level, a different position—"

"And a different taste, a different characteristic," says Tarler. "It's not black and white—"

"But it's noticeable," says Price. "And there are some problems with keeping things the same from year to year. So even though it's graded, the first thing you have to do is sample it and test it and smoke it to make sure it's the same as last year. And if it isn't, you have to adjust for it."

Charlie Price provides the bulk of C&D's tobaccos, and his experience has proved crucial, because part of his job requires recognition of a tobacco's characteristics—it is not just a matter of matching grades.

"When I was choosing what oriental I wanted to use," says Tarler, "I sent Charlie a sample, and he matched it. And the characteristics in that original sample have remained true. Without that kind of competence I couldn't operate with any real efficiency."

Tarler pauses. "Speaking of operating," he says, "but not necessarily of efficiency, let's blend some tobacco." He opens the recipe box mounted above the blending table and starts pulling numbered bags of tobacco off the shelves, weighing each element of number 531—Yale Mixture—and pouring it onto the huge table.

The blending table is the dominant focus of the shop, a gleaming 12-foot-long stainless steel trough. "I got it years ago from a pharmaceutical company," says Tarler. "It was originally two troughs, 15 feet long, with 9-inch and 4-inch edges. But I found a machinist to cut the 4-inch edge off and cut the troughs lengthwise and weld them together into a single table, with the leftover piece for the ends. Perfect for blending, and it really keeps things clean." Tarler can blend up to 150 pounds of tobacco on this table. "If," he adds, "I use the latest in advanced equipment—like a garden fork!"

The major advantage of this table is that it allows Tarler to ensure that individual blends are uncontaminated by other blends. "With stainless steel, I can use alcohol between batches. If I don't do that, and if I make an aromatic blend on top of one with latakia in it, it will pick up the latakia instantly. Even though the table may look clean, the alcohol will remove an amazing amount of invisible tobacco residue. And I'll find something else to do

while the residual alcohol evaporates so it won't get in the next batch."

The tobacco mixes easily. "You'd think there'd be a problem getting it to mix evenly," says Tarler, "but it doesn't work that way." He runs his hands through the tobacco, mixing until the distinctive colors are muted into a uniform tobacco randomness. "I'm the only guy in the country using this cut," he says. "This is my cut." Price developed this tobacco cut to Tarler's specifications at his factory in Petersburg, Virginia. They spent an afternoon making sure it was exactly right. "The cut has to be just so," says Tarler. "Much of a blend's smoking characteristics are dependent on just the right cut. I'm lucky to have someone as qualified as Charlie processing my tobacco, someone I can depend on to get it right and keep it right."

Tarler is something of a purist. "I'm probably the only maker/blender today," he says, "that doesn't use additives on English blends. Aromatics are another story—they have flavoring added, of course. And because of the nature of the flavorings, propylene glycol is also used as a filler in the sauce."

Propylene glycol is a humectant used by blending companies to help the tobacco blends retain moisture. In its original form it is a thick, sticky, sweet liquid. Many smokers feel it dramatically changes the smoking characteristics of a blend. But this is an ongoing debate. Other smokers feel that propylene glycol has no unpleasant connotation and is beneficial for maintaining proper moisture levels in tobacco.

Tarler doesn't think that, though. All of the non-aromatic blends produced by Cornell & Diehl are additive-free. No propylene glycol is used. "You can smell the darn stuff," says Tarler. "And I suspect many people are allergic to it. I have a number of customers who complain of discomfort while smoking aromatics, and it disappears when they switch to English blends. It's dramatic; I hear it all the time. Besides, anything with propylene glycol has a sweet taste when you smoke it; it all tastes subtly like sugar, and it all has added bite. Sugar and bite and physical discomfort, where's the advantage in that?"

Tarler's determination not to resort to chemical humectants may be why his blends are regarded by some as too dry. "There has been some discussion on ASP [*alt.smokers.pipes*, an Internet discussion group] about that. I don't see why people want to pay for water in their tobacco or chemicals on their tobacco."

So Tarler adds only a moderate amount of water, sprinkling it across the surface of the tobacco from an old oil and vinegar cruet. "I use distilled water for moisture content—1 ounce of distilled water per pound brings it to about 15 percent moisture content. I also use 2 ounces of white vinegar per gallon of water, to protect the tobacco from mold.

"But propylene glycol is a different animal; it changes the complexion of the blend completely. And you don't get the full tobacco flavor out of it; you get sidetracked with the sweet and the bite. It makes all of the blends taste the same. But unless you can experience the same blend, with and without the additive, side by side at a blender's, you'll never know how dramatically your tobacco is changed by it."

The batch of Yale Mixture is now blended, and Tarler begins weighing and packaging it in 1-pound bags. "I've gone to 4 mil bags," he says, "because they don't breathe...anything less than 4 mils seems to let air in, which will dry out the blend—a possible problem, since I don't use propylene glycol." He squeezes the air out, closes the bag and takes it to the heat sealer mounted at the end of the table, where he melts a seal above the zip. He holds up the bag. "Now you just cut open the bag above the zip, and use the zip lock. Keeps it pretty darn fresh. These bags aren't cheap, but hey, they protect the product."

After sealing five bags, Tarler starts putting the remaining tobacco in the plastic tub that rests on top of his zero-calibrated digital scale. "Now watch this," he says, scooping the last of the tobacco in. "Now we'll see why ATF is so interested in this process.

"I made exactly 20 pounds of Yale with dry tobacco, I packaged 5 pounds, and now..." he checks the scale... "there are exactly 16 pounds and 2 ounces remaining, after adding the distilled water. So we have 1 pound, 2 ounces more than we started with. ATF keeps very careful check on this, so I have to pay tobacco tax on over a pound of water—tax that is, unfortunately, absorbed by my customers. And it's still what some would call too dry. Think what happens with all the wet stuff you buy, the tobaccos that come so moist. Think of the tax you're paying on all that water."

"Tobacco tax is high enough," says Price, enjoying the show. Tarler is a dynamic speaker. "Better to condition it at home to the moisture level you like."

"That's what I think too," says Tarler. "But hell, I'll sell water if that's what people insist they want."

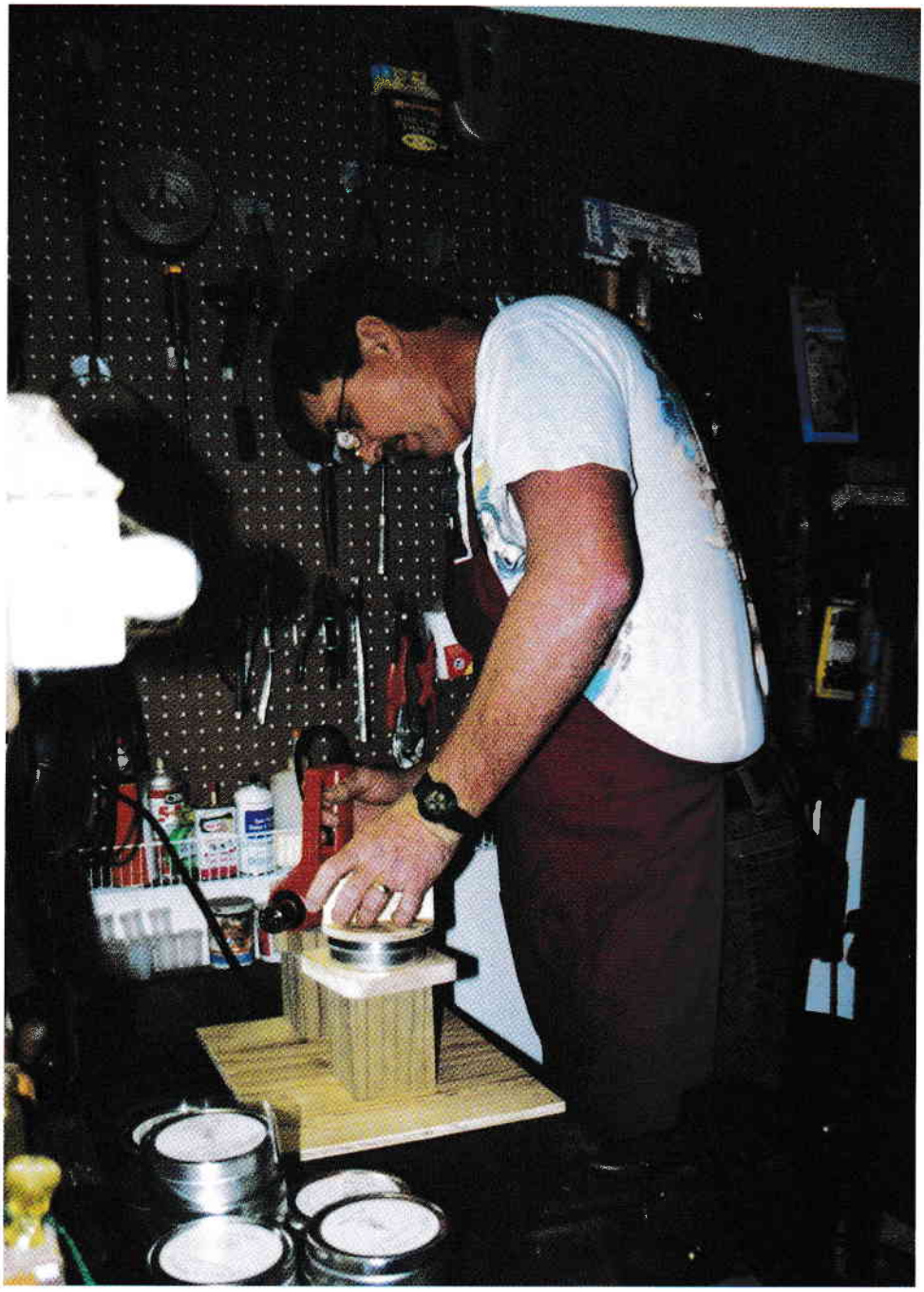
One of Cornell & Diehl's popular new offerings is pressed tobacco. Since it has become available, Tarler has found it a challenge to keep it in stock. Any blend can be ordered pressed in 1-pound blocks for its normal cost of $15.75 plus a $2 pressing charge.

"Here it is," says Tarler, his hand resting on the shiny new, orange 12-ton hydraulic press. "Charlie built the tobacco frame for me; works great." The press can accommodate six blocks at a time, taking three hours to complete the process. It is a smaller version of the one at Price's factory, which presses 12 pounds at a time. "But with this right here in the shop," says Tarler, "I can do small batches—I can press blocks quickly and ship them the same day. I still need Charlie, though, because I can barely keep up with demand. I can't keep Pirate Kake in stock."

Only 1-pound blocks are pressed; Tarler is not set up to press smaller portions, such as the 2-ounce tins of flake tobaccos that some blending companies offer. "You need a special saw to cut those flakes. I've seen it done. It requires a machine with a series of blades, almost like a bread-cutting machine. I have no room for that here," says Tarler.

The tobacco press helps meld a blend's flavors, marrying the different tobaccos in a blend for a smoother smoke. "It helps accelerate the melding process," says Tarler. "Not the aging process; that's an entirely different subject."

Aging, says Tarler, is already complete when he gets his tobacco. "Let's talk about aging for a minute," he says. "Tobacco, when it's 3 to 4 years old, when it's stopped sweating, is aged. That's as aged as it's going to get. Now, a lot of people are confusing that with mellowing. When you mix different tobaccos together, they're going to meld, and they will continue to meld and you'll end up with a richer flavor. So aging and melding are two different things and people interconnect the terms, and that's not correct. This is already aged tobacco. It will never get any better than it is now. But when you put it in a blend, then it will meld, and that will enhance the flavor." ▶



Barry Rupert heat-seals Cornell & Diehl tinned blends. The tobacco in each tin is also sealed inside an air-evacuated 4-mil-thick plastic bag. Opposite page: Tarler makes an adjustment on the 12-ton hydraulic tobacco press. It is a much smaller version than the one at Tobacco Services, where the bulk of C&D's blocks are pressed. Still, this simple ("I think I paid 136 bucks for it," says Tarler) shop version is efficient, pressing up to six blocks in three hours.

Craig and Patty Tarler.

The subject seems to remind Tarler of something, and he stares into space for a moment, then slowly relights his pipe as he decides to proceed.

"Something else some people are confused about should be discussed," he says. "Cavendish. Some people refer to cavendish as 'any aromatic.' I get a lot of it on the phone. A guy will say, 'Well, I've been smoking black cavendish.' And I say, 'You mean, black cavendish with vanilla on it?' 'Well, yeah, I guess.' Or they'll ask for cavendish and I'll ask what kind of cavendish, and they'll say 'cherry.' This happens all the time, and that is not cavendish." Cavendish happens to take aromatics very well, says Tarler, but they just do not grow strawberry or vanilla or chocolate cavendish tobacco plants.

"Black cavendish," says Tarler, "is Kentucky Green River Burley, steamed with either sucrose or fructose, and not washed. If that stuff is washed out, to remove the sweetness, then you get what I use." Tarler opens a bag of tobacco, exhibiting an almost black coloring.

"And the reason for washing it out," says Price, "is to remove the sweetness. This is a long, drawn-out process to get it this black. It's almost like a cooking process."

"But cavendish can also refer to a Burley/Virginia combination, or to the cut of the tobacco," says Tarler.

"Right," says Price. "A cavendish cut is a short, thin ribbon cut."

Another tobacco that can benefit from a "cooking" process is Virginia tobacco, and when stoved Virginias are called for, Cornell & Diehl stoves its own, using a heating unit and stainless steel trays.

"Stoving is a way to accelerate the aging process," says Tarler. "Slow heating helps break down the tannic acids. But you can do it at home, too. If your wife will let you use the crock pot, just cook some Virginia on low for about 12 hours; you'll get the same result." He has been doing a lot of stoving lately for a special Red Virginia in two new premium blends suggested by Joe Lankford: number 063, Bayou Night, and number 064, Mountain Camp. Cornell & Diehl's new line of premium blends sell for $19.75 a pound.

Cornell & Diehl seems to thrive on down-home ingenuity for achieving big-time results, and the developments just keep coming. One of the more humorous is Tarler's Hoover Mix, to go on sale around Christmas. He laughs and laughs over that blend. "I just vacuum all the tobacco off the blending table between batches," he says, "in my special Hoover Mix vacuum, and store it in 5-pound bags. It's absolutely random." Hoover Mix will go for $8 per pound (plus $3 shipping), "for those who dare," adds Tarler. When enough has been stockpiled to market, it will all be mixed in one giant batch, so that everyone will receive the same blend.

A number of new blends have recently been added to the C&D line of tobaccos, among them Stratfordshire number 061, suggested by a customer, Mike Cox. "I get a lot of blends from customers," says Tarler. "Not all of them, of course—I create a lot of my own. But sometimes a customer will come up with a blend that looks absolutely super, like this one. It's a middle-of-the-road English. And then I'll say, 'Do you mind if I make it commercial?' I give them credit, and they get to name it." Tarler says that about a half dozen of his blends have been customer-developed. "Pirate Kake was developed by a customer, Ray Bromley," says Tarler. "William Serad has come up with several, too. Those men really know their tobacco."

Still, the most popular offering this company extends is its famous trial pack. "For $20," says Tarler, "and that includes postage, we'll send out five 2-ounce samples from our catalog. You should call me, though, so that we can talk about what you like and so I can make recommendations." It's a great way for people to take advantage of professional guidance in trying several new blends at once. "Besides," says Tarler, "I just like talking to my customers, getting to know them and learning what they like and don't like."

And that is perhaps the most endearing quality of this company and of its owners. The Tarlers love what they do, without taking themselves so seriously that they can't enjoy the simple pleasures of meeting new people through a job well-done. Craig Tarler's laughter booms and echos whenever he is complimented on the company's accomplishments. "I don't think Cornell & Diehl can be considered a business in the legal sense," he insists. "It's too darn much fun for that." ***P&T***

Cornell & Diehl may be contacted at P.O. Box 475, Morganton, NC 28680; telephone 800.433.0080 (U.S. and Canada) or 828.433.0080; fax 828.433.1083; e-mail *cnd@hci.net*; or see its online catalog at *www.hci.net/~cnd.*

Charlie Price of Tobacco Services Inc., in Petersburg, Virginia, may be contacted at 804.732.6709.

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TOBACCO TALK

by Kevin Cook

Brigadier

Here's another of those English-aromatic crossover mixtures that I'm often attracted to. Unlike most such blends that I've tried, this one is heavier on the aromatic than on the English component, and all the more unusual since fruity flavors rarely meet Latakia in the same pipe.

In the tin, I first thought I smelled a concentrated berry essence reminiscent of sugar-drink flavor crystals. You don't really smell the Latakia in the tin, but it does make for a scent far denser than that of a typical aromatic.

Brigadier has a crumbly, pelletlike texture owing to the cube-cut burley base, which means that it lights and burns easily. The punch of the burley combines with a good dose of spicy Perique, as well as the fruit essence, to create an extremely zesty, fresh-tasting mixture.

The Latakia in the blend isn't really tasted as a distinct element, but it does contribute to taking the rough edge off the smoke and to making this a fuller and more richly bodied smoke.

I've been smoking this in a full-bent pipe and the sidestream smoke can really tickle the nostrils as it drifts around. This tastes citrus to me, at least in the first half of a bowlful, and there is a slightly bitter, powdery taste that reminds me somewhat of citrus rinds.

Before learning that the fruit flavoring used is apricot-based, I guessed that it contained a lot of lemon, as much as the idea of lemon tobacco sounded unlikely. The added flavoring seems to complement and bring out the natural fruitiness of the Perique in the mixture.

As it is smoked, the nutty taste of the burley base becomes stronger, creating a fruit-and-nut flavor of sorts. It burns to a dry, medium-gray ash and becomes sharper still at the bottom of the pipe. The room aroma when smoking is quite strong and distinctive, but its fruity scent should win you some compliments.

It's a satisfying smoke that might be a bit strong for someone who hasn't smoked a burley-and-Perique blend, but it's a nice change of pace.

One final note: I originally smoked this in a pipe reserved for Latakia blends and thought that the fruit flavor wasn't all that significant, but over time the pipe took on the distinctive aroma. I haven't tried to remove the flavor from the pipe, but I suspect it won't disappear soon.

Espresso

You don't have to open the pouch (or even be very near it) to smell this one, especially if it has just arrived! It might be named "Espresso," but I doubt I would have guessed coffee as its main aroma. Instead, I smell something like burnt caramel and vanilla, with the addition of something dark, such as licorice or chocolate.

Knowing that there's a coffee essence in the mixture, I can smell it, but it's definitely buried under the other flavorings. Maybe I would have figured it out by myself, maybe not.

When this arrived, it also had a cloying, fermented, sour smell to it, which was strange superimposed on its overall sweet scent, but this dissipated after a few days. This semimoist, medium-cut black cavendish tobacco is dark-brown and brown-tinged black, unlike the "average" American black cavendish mixture, which would be jet black and very moist.

Given how intensely aromatic this blend is in its pre-combustion state, it's odd how unspecific it tastes when smoked. "Dark and murky" would summarize how it tastes to me, as the highlights of the pouch aroma really don't translate much. This isn't to say that it's tasteless, just that it's not as vibrant or as sweet as the pouch aroma suggests. Like a soup that contains many ingredients, nothing really stands out.

It produces a reasonably mild, smooth, no-bite smoke that's rich-bodied. It's easy to smoke and easy to smoke a lot of! Although it's not a complex taste, it's not a flat flavor either.

While smoking, I get an occasional whiff of the burning caramel aroma that I smelled in the pouch, but I can't say I can taste it in any really distinct way while smoking. Some of this scent lingers on my moustache as well. ▶

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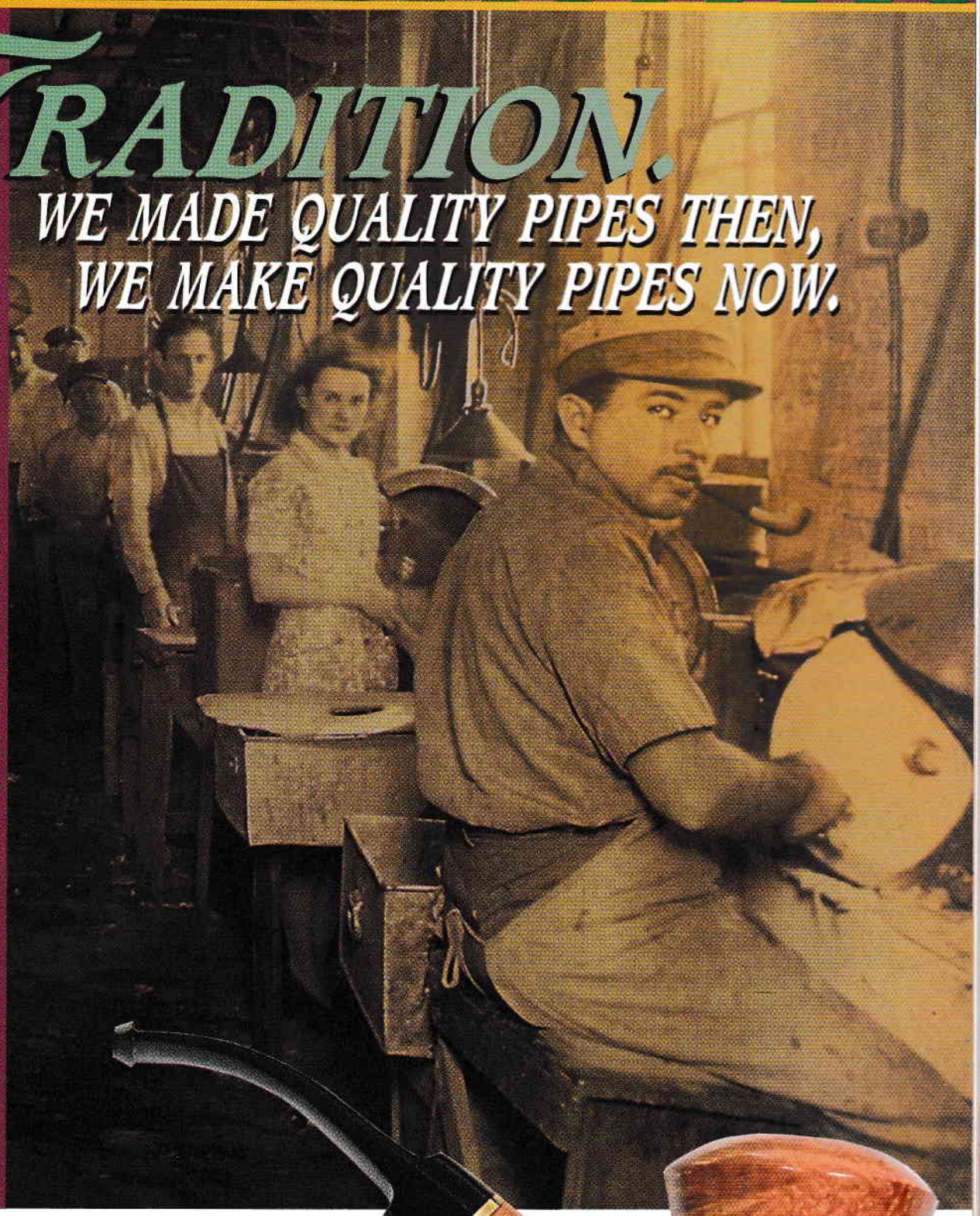

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One of this Espresso's most interesting qualities is that its dark, rich taste is somehow reminiscent of Latakia in character and depth of flavor. Anyone who likes this and has never tried a Latakia-laden English blend just might discover an affinity for Latakia!

Like many aromatic tobaccos, some of its flavor burns off toward the bottom of the bowl and it loses some of its sweetness, but it remains a dry and pleasant smoke with a fairly strong, but agreeable, room aroma.

Byzantium

Welcome to a full-flavored English blend.

This is roughly 60 percent dark tobacco with contrasting lighter strands. The texture is noteworthy: a rather coarse, long-cut mixed with crumbly tobacco. Because of this texture, it might not be the best mixture to smoke in a small pipe.

It has a strong, leathery, almost salty scent in the pouch, which is quite enticing provided that you like this style of tobacco, as I do. If you don't like Latakia, you don't stand much of a chance of enjoying this blend.

Once lit, this reminds me of how Dunhill's 965 first tasted to me (which I haven't actually had for a few years), but less complex. Earthy, stout, spicy—anything but bland. Its flavor is unequivocally intense, but it lacks the tongue-biting quality of many lighter blends.

I think this would make a great tobacco choice for a new pipe smoker who likes other intense taste sensations, such as chocolate, espresso, dark beer, or cigars even. The Perique is used in excellent balance here: enough to stimulate the palate, but not enough to produce a peppery or piercing smoke.

Its rich, full-bodied smoke is quite consistent from start to finish—fairly smooth and dry-tasting, with little flavor change during a pipeful other than getting a little spicier toward the bottom. This produces an unmistakable heavy Latakia aroma that you may have to apologize for if those sharing the room with you don't appreciate the warming scent of English-style tobaccos.

Stratfordshire

Here's a true middle-of-the-road English blend for someone who likes Latakia as a condiment, but not as a main flavor. This might also be the answer for the person who's looking for an English blend that shows off crisp, natural tobacco taste without being unduly strong.

The Virginia base offers a clean and slightly sweet taste. In contrast, a hint of leathery smokiness comes from the Latakia seasoning. Sometimes, especially in the upper half of a bowlful, its faint, natural sweetness stands out, while at other times, a more simple, toasted-oatmeal type of flavor dominates. Its slight tanginess does have the potential to get spicy, but unhurried smoking keeps it enjoyable and cool-smoking.

The smoke is medium-bodied at the most and not pungent. It is not strong in nicotine either. However, if it sounds bland, let me say that it isn't—the end taste is somewhere between simple and complex.

In the pouch, it has an attractive speckled appearance, containing yellow-beige, light brown and blackish medium-cut tobaccos. It burns dry to a fine light gray ash and leaves a bland tobacco aroma in the room after smoking that just might cause someone to suspect you had been smoking cigarettes, even though the scent is too sweet and clean for that.

Strathspey

This tinned mixture is billed as "heavy with Latakia and deep Orientals," with a "wee dram o' scotch." So it may come as a surprise that upon opening the tin a noticeable butterscotch aroma greets you. You may even wonder if an aromatic tobacco made its way into the tin instead of the English blend you had expected. But it's a musty butterscotch, so you decide this must be the right thing after all.

It's predominantly reddish-brown, medium-cut leaf with lots of lighter and darker speckles. Once you start smoking your first bowl of this, you'll probably find that it tastes nothing like its butterscotch tin aroma. It is, after all, despite first impressions, an English blend, and a fairly perky one at that.

To my taste, it's not quite as heavy on the Latakia as the description promises. I would consider this to be a medium English, but not a weak one. The smoke is fairly smooth and rich, but not heavy.

It starts out with a slight tang that fades after the first quarter of the bowl. This start makes me fear that it might bite, but it doesn't. It has a strong, dry, sandy taste that is slightly bitter on the palate, and occasionally almost grassy. At certain moments, it reminds me of a slightly diluted Balkan-type flavor. At other moments, I can smell a bit of the scotch aroma wafting up from the pipe, even though it is very difficult to taste.

A salty aspect seems to develop while smoking, particularly near the bottom of the pipe. No appreciable quantity of sweetness seems to mix into the taste from the black cavendish and scotch until after several bowls have been smoked in the same pipe. In fact, you'll probably forget that this is flavored once you get smoking. The added aroma does substantially affect the scent in the room while smoking, adding richness and making it less pungent. It burns perfectly to the bottom of the pipe, leaving a fine gray ash.

Rajah's Court

This light-colored tinned mixture consists of medium-cut, pale-through-medium brown tobacco, with darker flecks. The aroma in the tin carries the unmistakable leathery-smoky scent of an English blend, despite the obvious fact that it contains little Latakia.

Because it's fairly dry and includes a bit of broken flake, it has a rough texture. This

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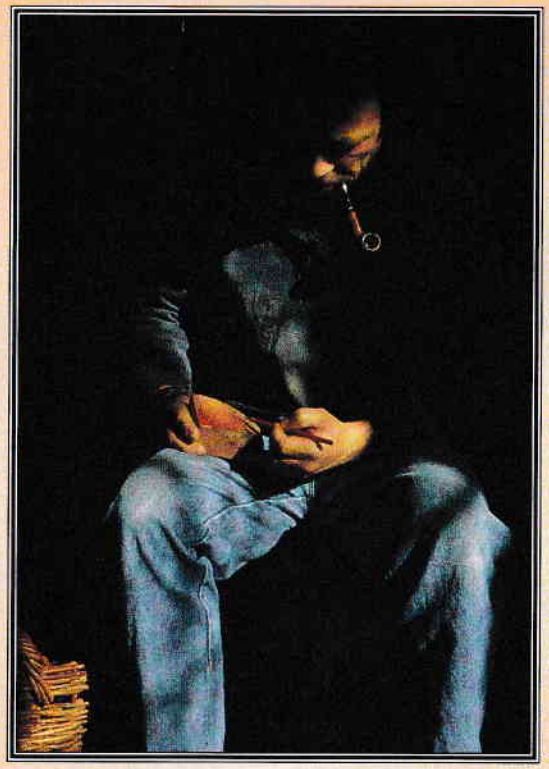

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is clearly a light English blend; if it were much lighter, it couldn't possibly have an English taste to it.

It has a slightly buttery taste and a slightly musty taste, seasoned lightly with smoky Latakia. It tastes slightly spicy as well, but I think this isn't as much a byproduct of actual flavor as it is of the tangy Virginia tobacco base.

The suggestion of spiciness plays off the suggestion of richness, which results in a very subtle complexity that I liked. The tanginess keeps it from tasting flat. I think this tastes best when the smoke is blown out through the nose, because doing so seems to accentuate the buttery taste. There is also a musty, partially roasted nut flavor lurking in the background that I find appealing.

These flavors all taste good to me, but diluted somehow. Note that this may well be just a reflection of my own inability to appreciate many lighter blends. It does take on a thicker flavor in the lower third of the bowl, and this is the part of the smoke that I preferred. This isn't smooth, but it isn't particularly harsh either.

I would never call this a cool smoke, but it's still cooler to my palate than a number of blends that manage to maintain a certain popularity. For some smokers, I think the tang of this one might be interpreted as bite.

Due to its relatively light flavor, it seems possible to actually smell this one somewhat while smoking, and this is the characteristic of Rajah's Court that I like the most. Smoke wafting directly off the top of the burning embers has a dense smoldering smell, but any that has mixed with the air somewhat before reaching my nose posesses a faint freshness that I really like.

I doubt that smoking this blend would elicit any wonderful comments with regards to its room aroma (although I personally like it a lot), but at least it's a much cleaner and less pronounced scent than that produced by a typical heavy Latakia mixture.

Bayou Night

This comes in a flattened brick that is blackish-brown with medium- and light-brown flecks. Since the tobacco is pressed, but not aged for a long time in the brick, it flakes off easily into medium-cut strands.

It smells slightly dark and peaty, and slightly sweet and fermented in the block, due to the Perique that is said to account for 50 percent of the mixture. This is quite a bit of Perique!

I approach Perique blends with caution as I occasionally find them harsh. However, my initial impression upon lighting up was that this is NOT harsh. The sidestream smoke has that pleasant, nose-tickling quality that Perique is famous for, and although the smoke tastes very alive and full in the mouth, there is no bite to speak of.

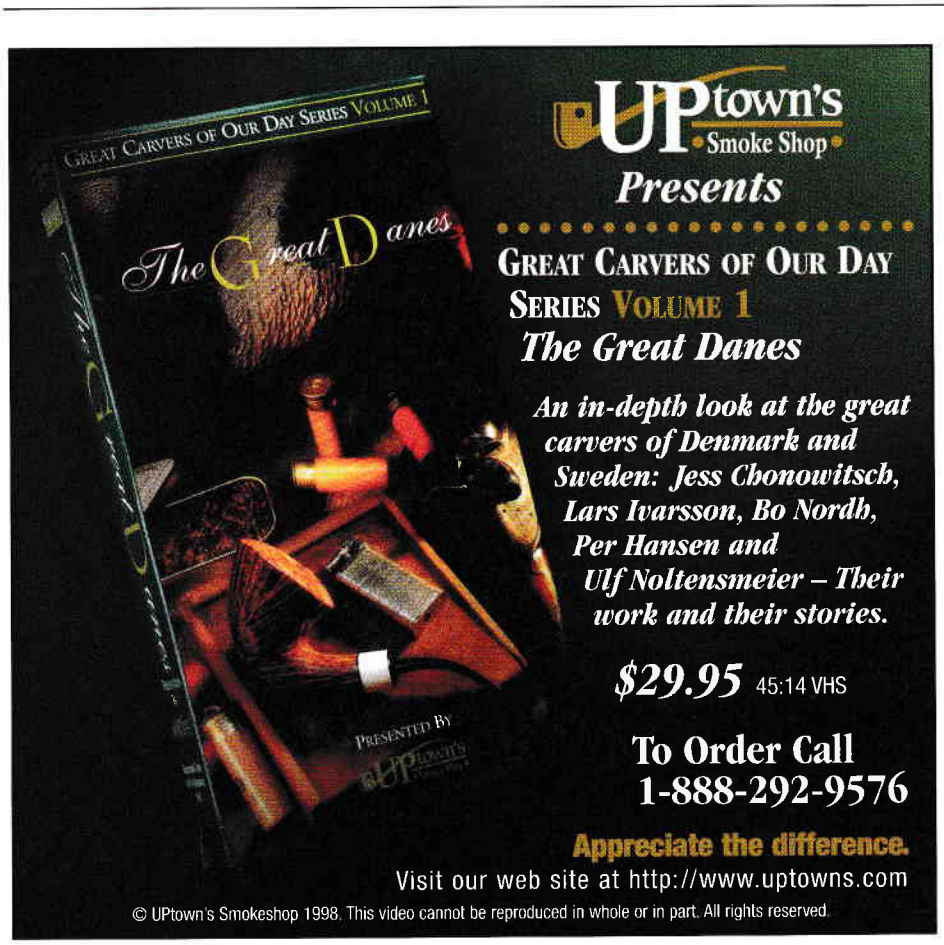
It's difficult to pinpoint the taste of this one. There is a hint of dark raisin in the flavor, with a dull sweetness that is always present. Some of this is from the stoved Virginia in the blend, some of it from the Perique.

There is a mellow, earthy spiciness to this smoke, but no sandy or nutty taste to speak of. And it's only barely smoky-tasting. So, even though it contains Latakia, it's not a "classic Latakia blend with Perique."

I taste the Latakia as a major ingredient only at the very bottom of the bowl, as much as I do realize that it contributes to the smoothness and rich body of the smoke. What makes it so striking is that its strong taste signifies for me a certain degree of harshness that quite simply does not exist.

I suspect that this would hold up quite well to regular smoking. This isn't a weak blend by any means, but it's an excellent example of how tasty Perique can be. It could be very popular among English-blend smokers who would like less Latakia, but no comparable loss of flavor or strength. It leaves a slightly sweet and musty aroma in the mustache and a citruslike tang on the palate. *P&T*

Kevin Cook has been recording his personal reactions to pipe tobaccos for the past three years, motivated by his love for the hobby and, he says, "as a way for this absent-minded pipe smoker to record his observations on what he did and did not like." Cook says there is no accounting for taste, "and mine seems to change over time."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American Cyber Shop

With 80 percent of its orders arriving via the Internet, the American Smoking Pipe Company thrives on special orders and customer-generated designs

by Chuck Stanion

"What is it about pipemaking," I said to myself, scrabbling up the icy Pennsylvania road, sometimes on all fours, "that makes carvers want to live in the middle of god-forsaken nowhere?" My car was at the bottom of the hill, where Mark Tinsky had warned me to leave it. "Whatever you do" he had instructed, "don't try to drive up the driveway. You will be killed." Walking, it seemed, would only cripple me. I slipped every 10 feet and slid back four.

I watched the house through the trees as I struggled closer, until finally I knocked on the door. "Tinsky?" said the man who answered my knock. "Nope, no Tinsky around here." He closed the door. It was a beautiful door. Mahogany, looked like. A tough door to kick down, but I was about to try when it again opened. "You know," the man said, "I think the guy just down the hill is named Tinsky. Over there." He gestured at a hundred thousand trees imbedded in a hillside of snow and closed the door again.

The trek back down was much faster, and after prying myself from under my car I noticed another driveway a few hundred yards away. No body tobogganing this time. I was driving.

But about a third of the way up the second driveway, Tinsky's advice seemed more valid, and I parked in a convenient snowbank at the bottom of a 10-foot embankment. I climbed through the remains of the windshield and clambered up to the house, where a note was taped to the door: *Come on in. We're in the basement.*

"Hello?" I called, stepping inside. Nice house. Big fishtanks in the living room. A voice called from somewhere below: "Down here!"

At the bottom of the steps was the workshop area, with an office off to the left. Tinsky came forward to shake my hand. "Welcome," he said. "How was the trip? Any trouble? Would you like some coffee? Cocoa?" He looked me up and down. "First-aid kit?"

"Just tell me one thing," I said. "*Why* live way up here in the mountains? There's nothing for miles but trees and moose. Is it for artistic introspection? Inspiration from nature? To escape the distractions of civilization? What?"

Tinsky laughed. "That's easy," he said. "It's cheaper."

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That answer makes sense. People don't make pipes to get rich, they make pipes for love of the craft. Pipemakers don't work out of Wall Street offices or Beverly Hills boutiques; they work out of their basements and garages and backyard workshops. Few are skilled enough to support themselves with their chosen vocation, and those who do manage are not typically millionaires.

Friends since childhood, Mark Tinsky and Curt Rollar were certainly not millionaires when they decided to start American Smoking Pipe. They were both experienced pipecarvers by then, having carved for Jack Weinberger, of JHW pipes, since high school. Tinsky had recently graduated from college and joined Rollar working in Weinberger's shop. But while they were full-time pipemakers, they still managed to take time for an adventure they had aspired to for years: a bicycling trip around the world. It was during the European leg of this campaign that they resolved to become partners in their own pipemaking business, one named to emphasize their pride in being American.

They didn't quite make it all the way around the world. "We had our pumps and spare tires stolen on the way to Turkey," says Tinsky. "At the end we were running on 30 pounds of pressure on 90 pound tires." They were also getting tired, and never felt welcome as they traveled through Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. "The Turkish experience was disheartening," says Tinsky. Natives stoned the cyclists in several of the Muslim villages.

"Maybe it was because we wore shorts, or maybe just because we were American," says Tinsky. "Ahead of us the Iranian revolution was just beginning. The U.S. Embassy in Greece had warned us to stay out of there. We were halfway through Turkey and pretty well committed to that route when we heard that Iran was getting worse. So we packed it in."

Tinsky isn't a scary guy to talk with. He's not tall, not overbearing, not intimidating. Instead he's jovial, outgoing and personable. But he doesn't retreat easily, and he possesses enormous energy. As a sideline to his pipecarving he runs a karate school. This guy teaches black belts to teach karate. But a revolution in a country that dislikes Americans is enough to turn anybody around. "Besides," he says. "We wanted to start our company!"

There were a few lean years when the

This briar dragon pipe was designed by Curt Rollar and Mark Tinsky, and was carved from a single block of briar. The dragon shape was carved at the Denike Carving School in Wayne, New Jersey. It was sold around 1986; the owner is not known.

partners got back to America. They built a workshop on a rundown farm in New Jersey where they were living as caretakers. They purchased a bandsaw and drill press with the money saved when they discontinued the bicycle trip. "It was a cold winter, though," says Tinsky. The shop had no insulation and was heated with only a small Franklin stove. Still, it was an improvement in living conditions for Tinsky—he *had* been living in a tent in Rollar's backyard before the move to the farm. "I was perfectly content in that tent," he says. "But I'm not sure what the neighbors thought."

When the farm was sold, Tinsky and Rollar decided to move to the Pocono Mountains. "We liked the region," says Tinsky. "And it was a real cheap place to live. So we packed up a van and moved to Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania."

Now they had a basement in a house for their workshop, instead of a chicken coop on a farm. They had a garage for storage. They had actual bedrooms. Sure, the quarry trucks that rolled by all day made the walls shake, but for $240 a month they were living in relative luxury. Tinsky started his karate school, which provided additional income. And the sales were slowly building.

As American Smoking Pipe entered the decade of the '80s, it started to gain some important attention. Major shops were now stocking the brand: Georgetown Tobacco in Washington, D.C.; Tinder Box at Lenox Square Mall in Atlanta; John B. Hayes in Fairfax, Virginia. By 1982 the partners were able to buy a house and set up a new workshop. Tinsky felt successful enough to get married. American's pipes were featured in retail catalogs; they had acquired a substantial following.

The '90s, however, brought Tinsky some setbacks. He was divorced from his wife, and also from his business partner. In 1990, when Tinsky was enthusiastically considering the expansion of the business, Curt Rollar decided to leave the partnership to pursue other interests.

"He went on a bit of a health kick," says Tinsky. "He got into kayaking; he stopped smoking, stopped eating meat. He loved smoking a pipe, but, oh well."

Tinsky moved his shop out of the home he had shared with his wife and into the 12x20 storage shed of a friend, Maryann, who is his current partner and companion. The business dissolution between Rollar and Tinsky was friendly, and Tinsky retained all rights to American Smoking Pipe, though it still seems strange to him without Rollar.

They currently live only a half hour apart, and Rollar still does the sandblasting for Tinsky's pipes. "He's working in a lumber mill now," says Tinsky. "He likes *big* machines. He's happy working with a 5-foot band saw. He likes wood, working with butts of ebony as tall as he is. You know, tree trunks. He loves doing that stuff."

"I really miss him," says Tinsky. He doesn't say so, but clearly he hopes that Rollar will come back to the craft. "We still talk pipes. I'll bring pipes over for him to sandblast and he'll look at them—and he still loves them, I can see it. He was the most talented pipemaker in the country. I mean, there are certainly a lot of carvers, all with individual specialties. But Curt could do all of it, he was always evolving. Who knows where his career could have gone."

That year also brought a drastic

decline in demand for American pipes. "It seemed like the early '90s hit, and the generation of pipe smokers from the '50s and '60s retired and moved to Florida and stopped smoking. Their pipes went on the market, and the estate pipe market took off, which hurt us and a lot of other pipemakers at first. Not so much now. The current generation of smokers hadn't picked up yet. That's when a lot of pipecarvers had to quit."

There were three very tough years then. Only one thing saved Tinsky: repairs. "I'd never really done any pipe repair except on my own. You know, if someone broke a tenon I'd fix it. But I really got into pipe repair in the early '90s. It was fun learning. Just taught myself, made mistakes, got better and better." The income wasn't what he had when he was just making pipes, but "It was enough. Our needs are simple, and pipe repair got us through." But right around 1993 business started improving. A new generation began picking up the pipe, and Tinsky had to get back to making pipes.

Now Maryann does most of the repair work. "Except on antique meerschaums," adds Tinsky. "I wish she would learn that—I don't like it myself." Maryann does all the polishing and staining now too. "When Curt and I were together," says Tinsky, "I'd do most of the finishing—he was worse than I was about getting around to it. I was bad and he was really awful. We both liked pipemaking and neither of us liked finishing."

Even so, Tinsky emphasizes that finish is extremely important. "It's something you can never stop improving. Especially with the competition with the Europeans, who are really great with finishes. Nording, Ser Jacopo, Castello, some of these guys are fantastic. But they have people who they can pay just to do that. We can't; we don't have much time to experiment."

The reason time is precious is that Tinsky can barely keep up with orders. And the reason for that is the Internet. "The Internet has made all the difference for me. Probably about 80 percent of my sales are over the Internet. It's huge. The figures are just getting unbelievable. There's a real hard-core pipe group out there. It's wonderful. It's totally transformed our lives."

American has a very successful Web page with sophisticated ordering menus. "My brother and I designed it," says Tinsky. "He's a computer engineer. He did the database." Pipe images are easily posted to the Web site. Tinsky just lays a pipe on his scanner, places a piece of cloth over it for a background, and scans it. "Then I just upload it to a folder. There's a template for new products and I just write, like, 'pipe 17,' add the description, price, whatever. Orders are coming all the time. Look over here," he says, sitting at the computer screen. "Just since we came in this room two more orders have come in.

"What I've been doing that is very different is I've been soliciting special orders over the Net. I have a page that promotes designing your own pipe, and guys just love it. I run three to four special orders a day. I'm only about four days behind now, we pump out a lot of work. As long as the briar is running good, you can do that."

Briar supply isn't typically an obstacle. American uses Grecian briar. "It generally takes a couple of months after I order it, though sometimes getting it through customs can be a problem. There's some new rule about agricultural products being boiled. It held me up for about 10 days last time I ordered briar. All you need is a certificate, some sort of proof. I ended up faxing customs my briar story, as it appears on my Web page, with pictures of boiling vats and the process it goes through before shipping. It worked; they released my briar."

Tinsky orders 10 bags of briar at a time, with around 300 blocks per bag. "But I sell to other pipemakers, too, so to keep my inventory up I order 20 bags a year." American is also in the business of selling pipemaking kits, which include briar block and lucite stem. "I'm doing maybe 10 kits a week," says Tinsky.

He doesn't put the briar through any particular curing process, "except to let it sit in a controlled environment for four or five years, till I get around to using it," he says. "One year, when we first went into business, there was a strike in Greece that made the briar supply impossible. It created a depression mentality in Curt and me.

we never wanted that to happen again. So whenever I have money I buy briar. It's a great investment. It never goes bad." He has a small warehouse for briar storage, not far from his house. "There are tons of briar just sitting there. Maybe that's the secret: controlled storage. I don't trouble myself with oil-curing. If the pipe is made well and the briar is good, it's going to smoke well."

Tinsky recommends one technique for breaking in an American pipe: "The most important thing is to reach the bottom of the bowl on the first few smokes so you develop an even break-in pattern, which will lead to an even cake. If you plan to smoke long enough to reach the bottom, then fill 'er up! If not, just fill to the point where you have time to reach the bottom. It's not imperative, though, to smoke every grain of tobacco in the bowl. Trying to ignite those last few often-wet flakes can lead to burn-out. Just use common sense."

Most of the new pipes Tinsky sells are special orders, taking from a week to 10 days to complete. "It depends on how heavy the workload is," Tinsky adds. "We really have to stay on top of it, and we work 12-hour days."

"More," adds Maryann.

"Yesterday I shipped out 36 boxes of work that came in Thursday."

"Thirty-eight," says Maryann.

"I can't stand to have work hanging over my head; it drives me crazy. And I feel if somebody orders something, a lot of times they order it over the Net, and they'll pay for it; it comes in with a credit card approval, and here I am, I gotta do it. I owe him that pipe, and I don't like to owe people."

Extraordinary special orders may take a little longer. "I try to get a price range on special orders," says Tinsky. "I say, 'OK what's your low end, what's your high end.' But I charge according to what happens with the quality of the briar. Naturals are more expensive, of course." Naturals are unstained pipes with flawless finishes.

Many of the pipes Tinsky has lying around his shop are leftovers from special orders. Sometimes someone will order a high grade and Tinsky will have to create several incarnations to get the specified quality in that shape. But he doesn't feel he ever gets stuck with a pipe. "I just post them to the Web page, and they'll sell eventually. Pretty fast, actually. I just haven't gotten around to scanning these."

He picks up a pipe from the shelf.

"Here's one. This guy wanted top straight grain and it took me three tries. This one wasn't quite up to that standard. Actually I kinda lucked out—it took only three tries."

Tinsky is accustomed to selling the odd pipe from his workshop. "We used to work that way when I worked for Jack Weinberger," he says. "We could make the most bizarre, spooky stuff in the world and we knew that someday he would have to sell it. It's different when YOU have to sell it. That was a major step when we went into business, realizing that we couldn't just make what we like, we had to make what would sell."

But the Web page makes that much easier. "Everything I have I put on the Web site, typically 50 to 60 at any one time. Part of the problem with the special orders is I'm always working on special orders, I'm not working on stock. We really could use another pipemaker, which is why I keep trying to get Curt to come back. The special orders are enough to keep one guy busy. I could sell more pipes if I had more pipes."

The repairs also get overwhelming at times. "Luckily Maryann can just about keep up. It gets real hectic around here. And again, it's because of the Internet. If I had to depend on retail pipe sales, I wouldn't make it. Just a handful of shops still carry Tinsky pipes. But the special orders and the repairs that come in through the Internet are staggering."

Tinsky can make a pipe in a couple of hours, as a rule. He made a perfect bulldog for the writer Victor Miller during the course of this interview. Part of what keeps the production streamlined is that Tinsky uses premanufactured stems, as opposed to handmaking them.

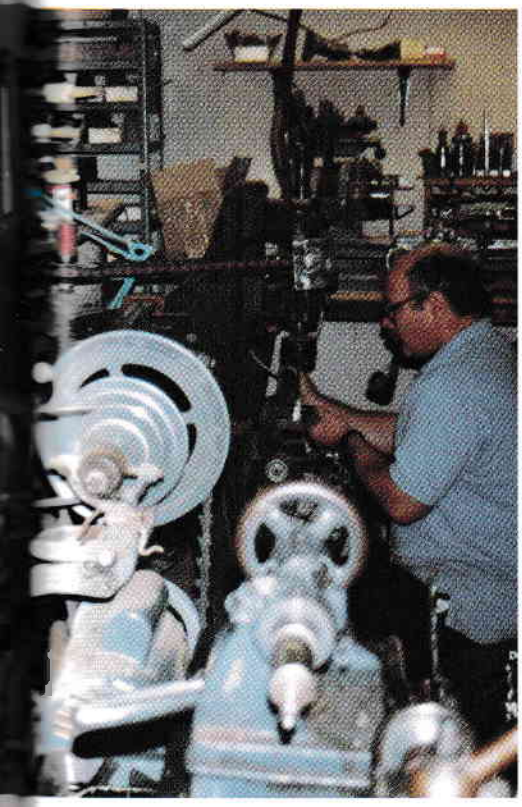
The stems are imported from Italy. "I have them custom cut by a small manufac-

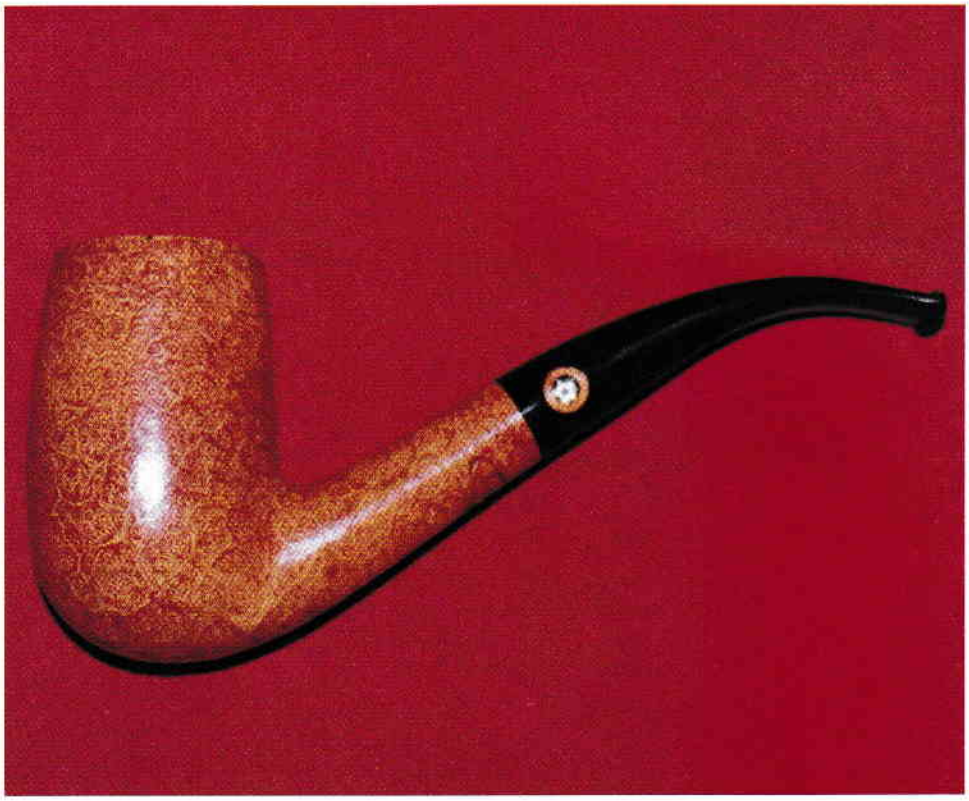
turer," says Tinsky, "and I'll be honest—I modeled them after the Ser Jacopo stem, a fantastic handcut stem. I don't have time to handcut stems, and there's no good stem material in the U.S. anyway. In this country lucite is molded, but in Europe it is cast. Molded lucite will melt when you machine it, and it's just not the same quality."

So American's stems are pre-made and pre-drilled. "I cut the tenon on the lathe and sand them. The most important thing about a stem is the end. If the end isn't thin and comfortable, it's useless." Tinsky's stems come with the bit machined to 0.170 inches. "Dunhill typically uses 0.165," he says, "and they are beautiful, very comfortable stems. So these are close. We're talking 5/1000 of an inch. A handcut stem is really beautiful, but there is almost as much work in making a stem as a pipe. I could only make half as many pipes if I wanted to make handcut stems, and I'd rather make pipes than stems. You have to make your compromises somewhere.

"So I make a handmade pipe but I don't make a handmade stem. It's handturned in Italy, but that's that. And it's a good, strong stem." He takes a pipe off the shelf and tosses it into the next room, where it bounces unhurt on the carpet. "See?"

If someone wants a very thin stem, Tinsky handfiles it. And he has some quality stem material on hand for special cases. "I do occasionally handmake a stem, when the circumstances require it—sometimes you just have to do it."





But for the highest quality pipe at the most reasonable price, Tinsky has developed his own mix of hand-craft and production. Other manufacturers, he says, may do things differently, but he doesn't feel any sense of competition. There is plenty of room in the industry.

"My philosophy is, any brand that creates an interest in pipes, like the European pipemakers, Castello, Upshall or Ser Jacopo, for example, only help the American market. When these pipes became popular it didn't hurt U.S. carvers, because they created demand and interest in the pipe industry, and that's more important than interest in any one brand. That's what makes the industry grow." ***P&T***

American Smoking Pipes have had a series of markings since their inception in 1979.

The first 300 pipes had "AmSP" stampings, with no markings on the stems. The circled word "American" and an imprinted star were stamped on subsequent pipes.

From October 1984 a plain, inlaid white star was used in conjunction with a date, the earliest being November 1981, and the initials of the maker. For example, a pipe stamped *0185/CR* would have been made by Curt Rollar in January 1985. When numbers appear, such as 15, it is merely a price code, helpful for those occasions when Tinsky and Rollar swapped out pipes of equal value with retail shops.

In 1985 American started converting to lucite stems, and in 1986 indicated these pipes with a briar ring around the star. When they went to all lucite stems, they kept the star with briar ring. "In 1990 I tried to get rid of it," says Tinsky, "replacing it with a brass ring. But I got so many complaints I had to go back to the star in 1991. Occasionally a brass ringed stem will appear, but in those cases it is leftover stem stock."

In 1998 Tinsky is changing to a silver star with circle, which he is importing from Mexico. "It's time for a new look. To be honest, the stars don't always look right, they're a pain to insert. I'll be glad to have the new logo, and I think it will look great."

American's pipes are priced from $85 up, with the highest grades costing around $400, though an occasional super high grade may cost more. Catalog shapes are available in four finishes: Rustic, Walnut, Light and Natural. Other finishes are available for special orders. Depending on size, sandblasts are available from $95 to $135.

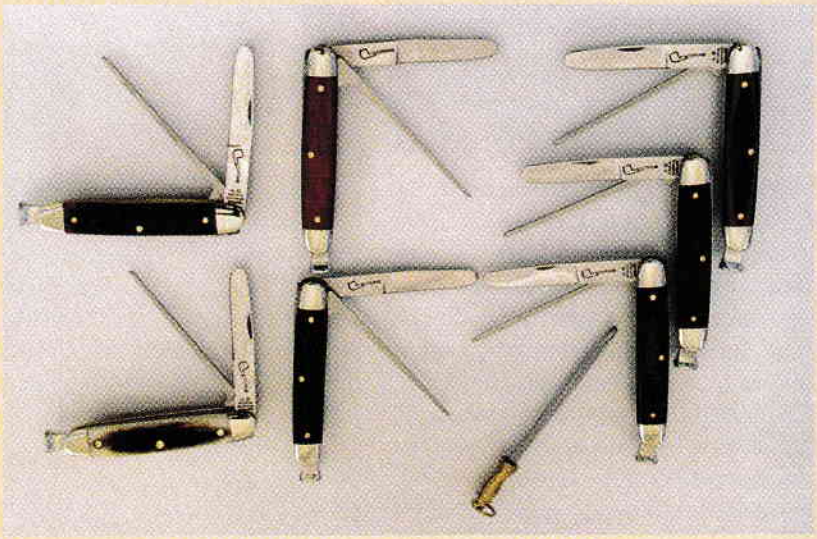
Mark Tinsky may be contacted by writing to American Smoking Pipe Company, HC-88 Box 223, Pocono Lake, PA 18347. Visit his Web site at *www.Amsmoke.com*, or e-mail him at *mt@epix.net*.

Tampers by Vautrin

A new line of handcrafted Tampers by Vautrin, featuring rare woods and exotic materials, was introduced at the Chicago Pipe Show in April. Woods such as cocobolo, East Indian rosewood and pink ivory (so rare it was thought to be extinct) are combined with bone, horn, antler, tagua nut and such minerals as malachite and lapis lazuli, then tapped and threaded to machined brass. Many designs feature a screw-off tobacco pick. With a distinctive heft and straightforward design, these tampers offer the best in practicality and beauty. For more information call 703.878.7655; fax 703.878.7657; or visit the Tampers by Vautrin Web page at *http://www.pipeguy.com/vautrin.htm.*

Joseph Rodgers pipe knives

The Sheffield Exchange, famous for its pewter smoking accessories, has introduced a new line of pipe knives handcrafted by Joseph Rodgers of Sheffield, England. These handset wooden, horn-and-bone-scale pipe knives feature silver-plated bolsters and come handsomely sleeved in a leather case. The brass-capped sharpening steel is standard with the bone and horn knives. Each individual style carries the name of a medieval-managed woodland or parkland that made Sheffield famous. Suggested retail ranges from $75.95 to $134.95. Call 804.746.7900 for a catalog or for a retailer near you, or see the company's Web catalog at *www.sheffieldexchange.com.*

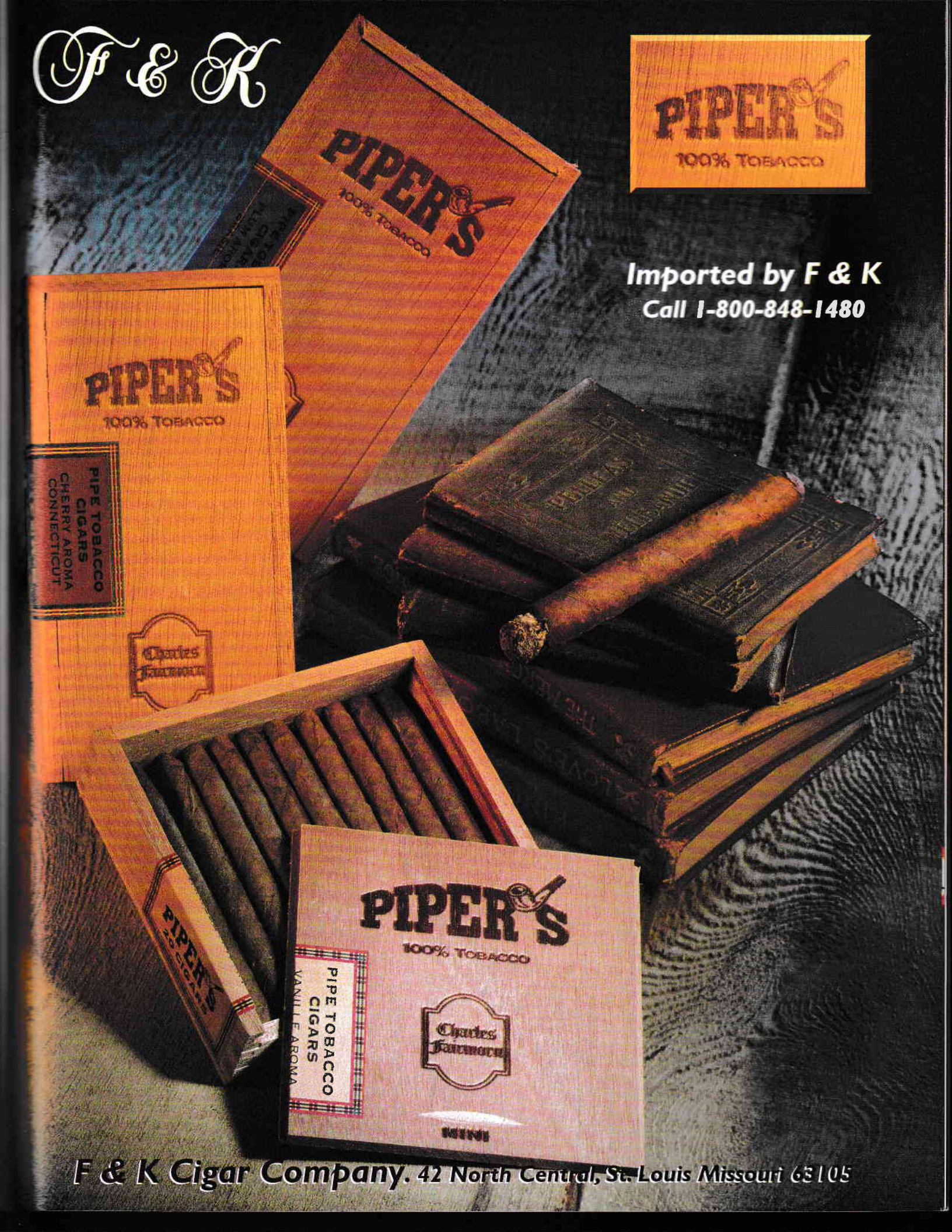


Tommaso Spanu Pipes

Tommaso Spanu Pipes, distributed by Joe Giardina, is a new line of fine, handcrafted Italian briar. For further information contact Joe's Pipe Repair & Imports, 2004 Madison Avenue, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025; fax 618.656.0913; or telephone 618.656.0892.

Ardor Detectives Series

Ardor's Great Detectives Series is handmade in Gavirate, Italy, by master pipe artisan Dorelio Rovera. The three-piece set depicts the styles of detectives Sherlock Holmes (top), Jules Maiget (center) and Philip Marlowe (bottom). Each pipe features sterling silver bands and includes its namesake detective's name. The set is housed in an attractive presentation box and includes a booklet on the great detectives. For the Ardor retailer nearest you, contact Monjure International, 12 Cedar Creek Drive, Jamestown, North Carolina 27282; telephone 336.889.2390; or fax 336.889.9437.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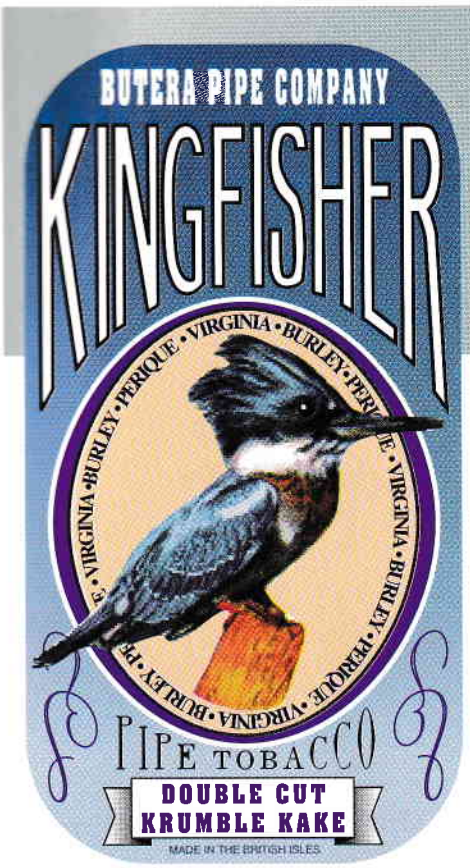

Butera Kingfisher

The newest addition to the Butera line of pipe tobacco is Kingfisher, a blend of burley, Perique and Virginia tobaccos. Find Kingfisher at fine tobacco shops everywhere carrying the Butera line.

Briar Pipe Wipe

Briar Pipe Wipe helps protect stems from discoloring, as well as keep a shine on pipe bowls. For information on the retailers nearest you, call Arango Cigar, 800.22CIGAR.

Woodford Reserve

From along the banks of Glenn's Creek, Labrot & Graham Distillery (established 1812) presents a very special whiskey: Woodford Reserve, aged in the finest barrels and married with the famous limestone water of Kentucky's Bluegrass region. Look for Woodford Reserve in fine spirits shops everywhere.

CAO

Choose the perfect Father's Day gift from the new CAO Father's Day Line. No two CAO meerschaums are exactly alike. Handcrafted in Turkey, these pipes offer the finest in cool, dry smoking. For further information, contact CAO at 800.237.8226; or fax 615.353.0610.

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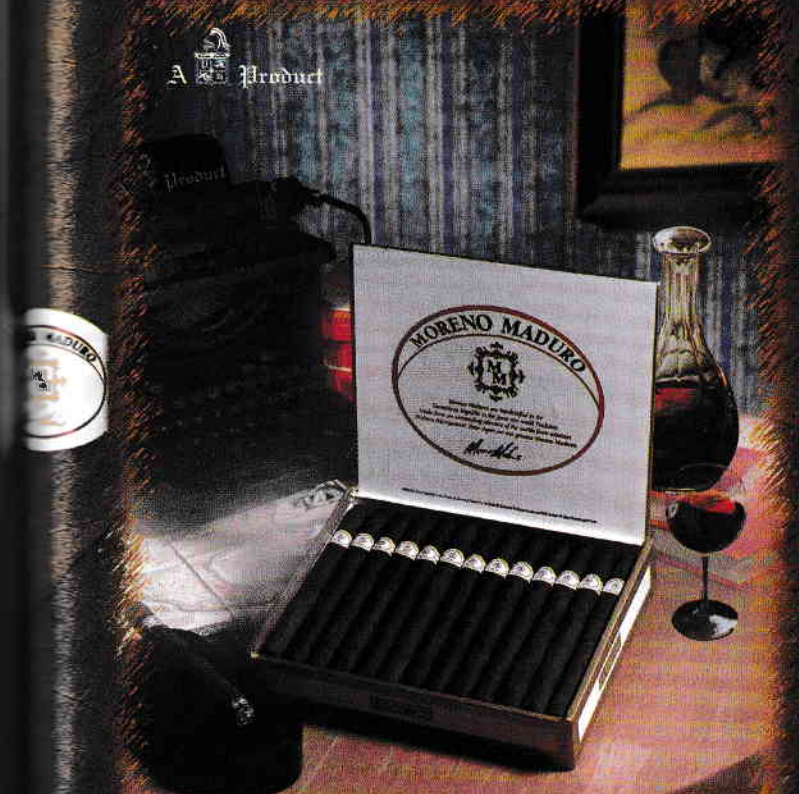

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Zippo/Case ▲

The Zippo/Case Visitors Center features a museum, the famous Zippo Repair Clinic and a retail store. The award-winning film "Saluting American Icons," chronicling the history of both Case and Zippo, may also be viewed at the center. Check it out in Bradford, Pennsylvania.

Castello 1997 Pipe of the Year

Castello Pipes of the Year are available at any of the 21 exclusive Castello Authorized Specialist shops in the United States. For further information, call 703.878.7655; fax 703.878.7657; or see the Castello Web site at *www.castello.net*.

Brebbia ▲

Pipe Brebbia has introduced a new series of pipes to replace its popular Jubilee line: *Grande Designers Della Pipa*, Great Pipe Designers. For the next 10 years, Brebbia will showcase the Brebbia creations of great artisans, such as Rainer Barbi (above left) and Pierre Müller (right). The program will culminate at the end of this period with a grand event celebrating Brebbia's 60th birthday. Further information may be obtained by contacting Monjure International, 12 Cedar Creek Drive, Jamestown, North Carolina 27282-8800; by calling 336.889.2390; or faxing 336.889.9437.

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Relax with a Marxman

Marxman pipes were once seen everywhere, smoked everywhere and advertised everywhere. Now they are reminders of another era

by Bruce Harris

Groucho Marx. Chico Marx. Harpo, Gummo, Zeppo and Bob. Wait a minute...Bob? Bob Marx was not one of the famous Marx brothers, but if you were a pipe smoker 50 years ago, you knew Bob Marx and his Marxman pipes as well as any movie fan ever knew the others.

One of the treats of perusing the yellowed and fragile pages of *Pipe Lovers Magazine* (1946-1950) is the advertisements. The late George Cushman, editor and publisher of *Pipe Lovers Magazine*, well remembered Marxman pipes: "Bob Marx was my first advertiser. [He] bought my back cover for all 12 issues of my first year, 1946. He hadn't ever seen the magazine because it hadn't been published yet, yet he bought the back cover. I didn't even have a price I could quote him, so [I] had a hurried conference with my printer to determine what the back cover in four colors would cost."

It was one such colorful ad that hooked me, and for the past several years, I have been collecting and smoking Marxman pipes.

There is conflicting information as to when Bob Marx founded the Marxman Pipe Company. It was either 1934 or 1935 when he began operations at 27-29 West 24th Street in New York City at the age of 29. Prior to this period, Marx worked as sales manager for David Schulte at the William Demuth Pipe Company. Marx and Schulte had a falling out in late 1933 or 1934 over what Marx claimed were a series of broken promises. Marx had accepted the position of sales manger under certain conditions. The first condition was that Schulte would agree to an advertising plan recommended by Marx. Another was that Schulte agreed not to cut prices on the Demuth pipes sold in Schulte's stores across the country. However, Schulte, a tough businessman, had his own agenda.

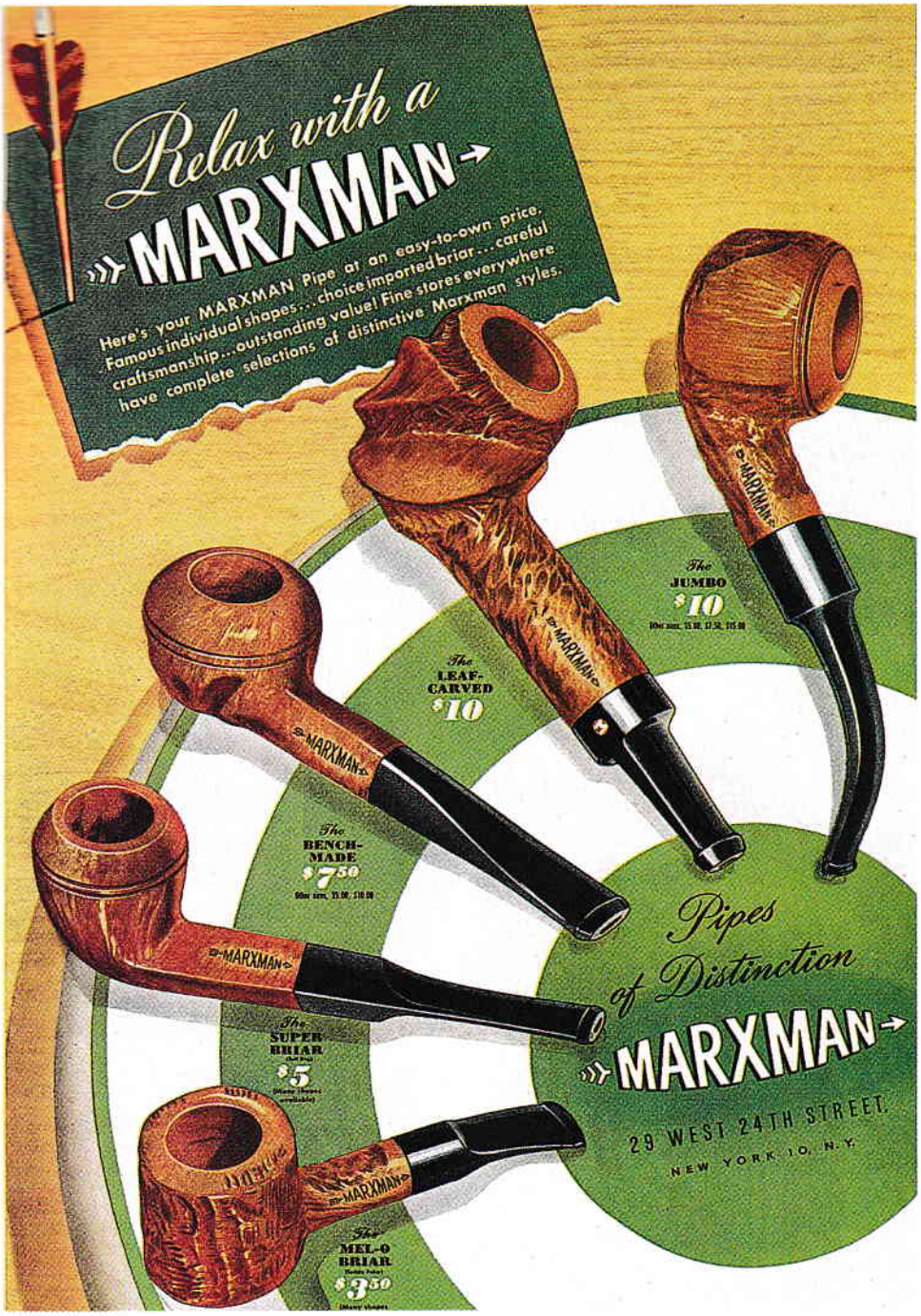
Without Marx's knowledge, Schulte reduced the Demuth advertising budget and dropped the price of the "Milano" pipe from $3.50 to $2.49. At the time, the Milano was William Demuth's top-of-the-line pipe. Marx was furious. He had made promises to pipe shop owners around the country, and it was their perception that Bob Marx was not a man of his word. He immediately resigned from the Demuth company and decided to venture out on his own.

Marx hired seven experienced pipemakers, among them Louis Cowan, who served as the general manager and foreman of the newly created Marxman Pipe Company. Cowan had been in the pipe business for 29 years, beginning with the London firm Loewe & Company, and was an expert in the English method of hand-making pipes. For many years he had produced special and carved pipes to order. His knowledge, expertise and experience influenced Bob Marx's decision to produce distinctive, unique pipes. Helen Sohn, Marx's wife, ran the office and kept the books while Marx sold the pipes.

Two other veteran pipe men hired by Bob Marx were Hugo Sohn and Max Herzig. The two brought 80 years of combined pipe knowledge to Marxman Pipes. Hugo Sohn served as the chief pipe inspector. According to an article from a 1946 issue of *Pipe Lovers Magazine*, Sohn inspected every Marxman pipe produced in the Marxman factory. Max Herzig was in charge of polishing the pipes.

Despite having surrounded himself with a team of experienced artisans, Marx's pipes were not of superior quality. They may have been a commercial success, but many Marxman pipes survive today with visible fills, some of which are severe. The overall quality of a Marxman is no better than average. In fact, respected pipemaker and expert pipe repairman Jim Cooke of Vermont doubts that Marxman pipes would survive in today's marketplace. "The quality and workmanship [of these pipes] is amateurish," says Cooke. "My guess is that they used a low-grade wood, probably Algerian Briar, with very little grain." This may explain why

The briar pipe opposite is a self-portrait by Marxman sculpter Jo Davidson, created in 1947. The pipe is part of the collection in The Museum of Tobacco Art and History in Nashville, Tennessee.


Relax with a
MARXMAN
Here's your MARXMAN Pipe at an easy-to-own price. Famous individual shapes... choice imported briar... careful craftsmanship... outstanding value! Fine stores everywhere have complete selections of distinctive Marxman styles.
The JUMBO $10
The LEAF-CARVED $10
The BENCH-MADE $7.50
The SUPER BRIAR $5
The MEL-O BRIAR $3.50
Pipes of Distinction
MARXMAN
29 WEST 24TH STREET
NEW YORK 10, N.Y.

The above pipe is from the Marxman 400 series, with Bob Marx's signature stamped on the bottom.

most Marxmans were heavily carved, thus hiding the inferior wood.

The first Marxman pipes sold for $1 or less. The Triple Sec and the Scotsman were two early models, but they were not big sellers. Undaunted, Bob Marx continued to experiment with new ideas. He was an innovator, an excellent public relations man and a shrewd businessman, realizing that to be successful, you had to be a little different from the next guy. He was also a believer in properly marketing himself and his pipes.

To achieve his goals, Marx decided to carve designs into the bowls, producing distinctive, unique pipes. He raised prices, and was very successful, selling pipes in the $3.50 to $10 range.

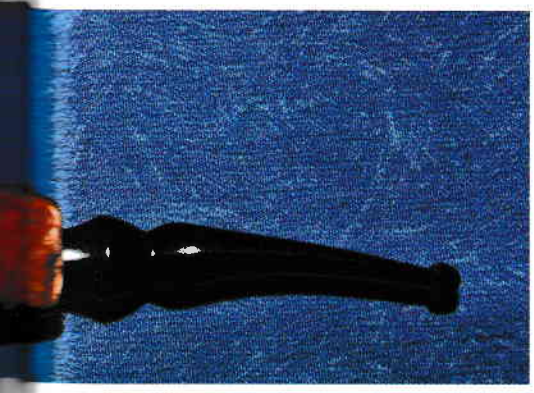
In 1938 Marx went to Hollywood, where he obtained agreements with motion picture studios to supply pipes to their leading men. Actors such as Zachary Scott, Dennis Morgan, Jack Carson, Alan Hale, Joel McRae and Ronald Reagan were pictured on Marxman promotional displays. Even Bob Marx himself got national exposure. Along with a 12-foot plaster Marxman pipe, he made several appearances on the television show "Truth or Consequences." Show contestants vied for prizes by guessing the number of ounces of tobacco it took to fill the giant Marxman pipe.

During the early 1940s, many pipe companies had a difficult time obtaining quality briar. However, the war years did not have a deleterious effect on the production of Marxman pipes. In fact, just the opposite was true. Bob Marx had the foresight to purchase enough briar in 1939 to last him five years. In 1943, the Marxman factory was so busy it could not keep up with demand. Outside contractors were hired to finish the pipes, stamp the Marxman name on them and ship them off. This is an interesting point, because close examination of the stampings will reveal differences in size and spacing of the letters in the Marxman logo. These differences may be attributed to early versus later manufactured pipes, the particular factory stamping the pipe or, more likely, a combination of both.

The innovative Bob Marx was always thinking of new and creative ideas for the pipe consumer. Not all of these ideas were successful. For instance, Marx predicted a huge increase in the number of pipe-smoking women during World War II. He reasoned that women would turn to pipes when faced with a shortage of cigarettes. To prepare for this anticipated increase in demand, 40,000 pipes with bowls the size of thimbles were produced.

Alas, the predicted demand never materialized and the pipes were a flop in the United States. However, Marx was able to sell these small, often painted pipes to dealers in South America. Fortunately for Marx, small pipes were popular with pipe-smoking men in South America.

Although sales were quite good for the Marxman Pipe Company during the 1940s, doing business in wartime America had its complications. Because of the war, half of the pipes made had to be sold to the government for shipment overseas to American troops. The immediate impact of this government policy was positive.



However, most of the pipes purchased by the government wound up in warehouses and not in the hands and mouths of soldiers overseas. When the war ended, the government, faced with a surplus of pipes, dumped these pipes on the American market, depressing sales of U.S.-made pipes. The problem was compounded because European pipe companies were also selling pipes to Americans, often at lower prices.

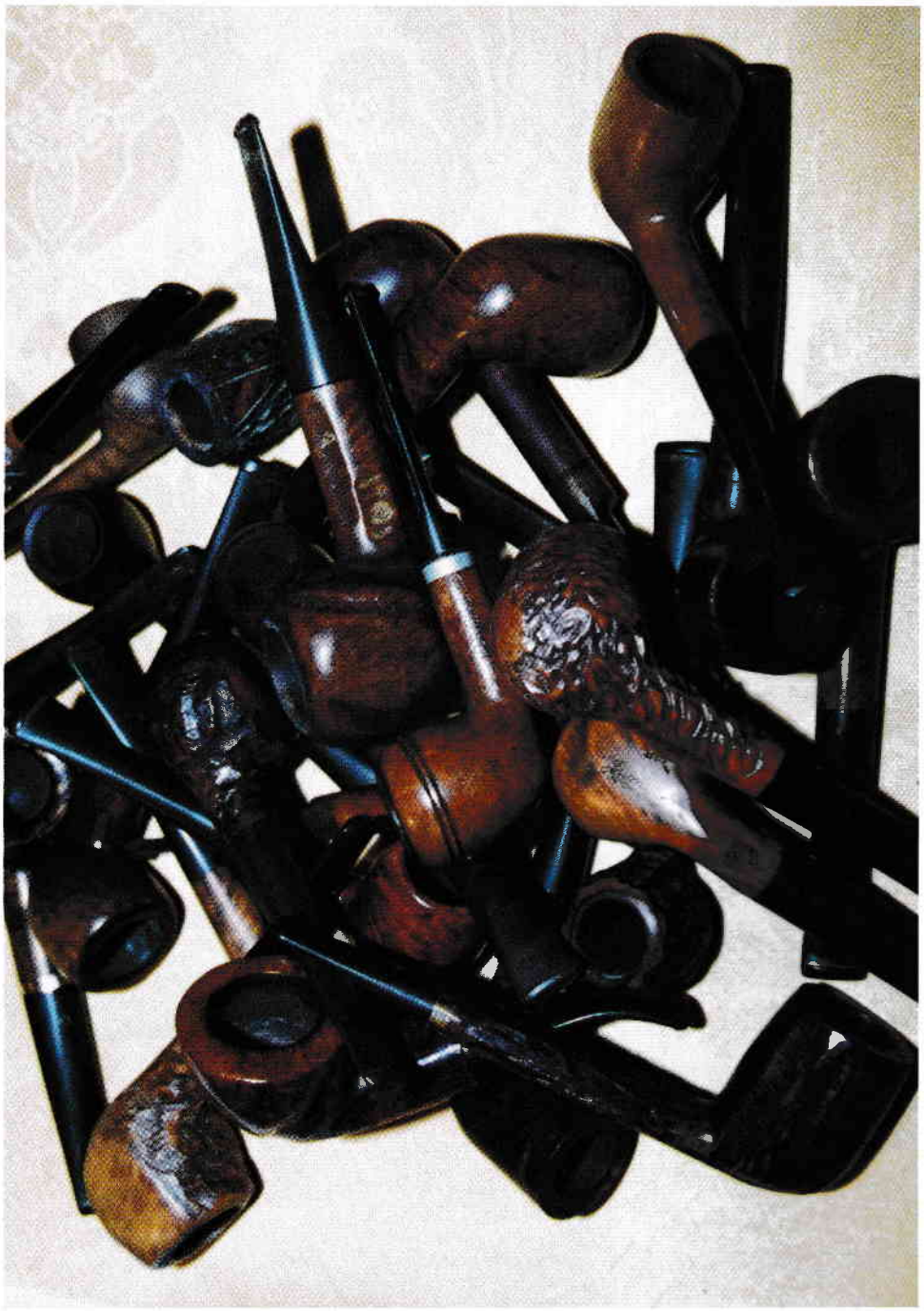
The Marxman Pipe Company began to feel financial pressure in the late 1940s to early 1950s. The company experienced a problematic cash flow. Even during these tough times, Bob Marx was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising. Marxman pipe advertisements could be found in many magazines of the day, including the previously mentioned *Pipe Lovers*, as well as *Esquire* and *Outdoor Life*.

It was during this period that Bob Marx made a costly business mistake. He changed the Marxman Pipe Company from a partnership between himself and his wife into a corporation. The Marxes could no longer claim business expenses against their personal income tax.

By 1951, the financial picture deteriorated. Bob Marx felt a responsibility to his employees, some of whom had been with the company from the start. He tried to hold on. According to pipe authority Richard Carleton Hacker, Marx had some of his pipes made (in later years) in one of the now defunct pipe factories in St. Claude, France.

The end of the Marxman Pipe Company came in 1953. Bob Marx agreed to a merge with Mastercraft Pipes, which at the time was the largest importer of pipes in America. After the merger, Marx stayed on as a goodwill ambassador, leaving himself time to devote to hobbies such as golf, shell collecting and sculpturing.

It had been a great run for Bob Marx and his Marxman Pipe Company. Fortunately, one can still turn back the hands of time and find a presmoked (or unsmoked) Marxman pipe for under $20. They are no longer "Sold at Fine Stores Everywhere," but you can still sit back, light up and "Relax With A Marxman."



MARXMAN PIPE MODELS & NOMENCLATURE
(Retail prices are circa 1945)

SELECTED GRAIN - Economical, smooth-finish pipe. These briars were found during the process of making other pipes in the Marxman line. Briar that did not make the grade became Selected Grain. Available in 36 shapes. Retail price $2.50.

MOROCCO - The lightest-weight pipe in the Marxman line. All surplus briar was hand-tooled away, producing a pipe with a distinctive pattern in diamond head relief. Retail price $2.50.

MEL-O BRIAR - The most common currently found Marxman pipe. The low end of the retail line, marketed more heavily than the Selected Grain and the Morocco. Handmade and sculptured by old-time craftsmen, according to Marxman advertisements. Fashioned of thoroughly aged, carefully selected briar. Varied shapes rich in umber tones. Always found with a rusticated finish. Available in 36 shapes. Retail price $3.50.

SUPER BRIAR - Smooth finish pipe. Each piece of briar was selected for its perfection of grain pattern (a Marxman boast). Typically found today with mediocre grain patterns.
Retail price $5 for the basic Super Briar. Royal was available for $7.50, and the Deluxe sold for $10.

BENCH-MADE - Imported, seasoned briar, carefully and skillfully turned and tooled by hand. Bowls had distinctive, carved patterns, although a few Bench-Mades have smooth finishes. Priced according to size: Regular (Group 3) $5, Large (Group 4) $7.50, and Massive (Group 5) $10.

JUMBO - Individually carved briars of exclusive, unrepeated design. Priced according to size: Regular or size A (Group 3) $5, Large or size B (Group 4) $7.50, Massive or size C (Group 5) $10, and the rare size D (Group 6) $15.

THE FOUR HUNDRED - The "Aristocrat" of pipes according to Marxman advertisements. A large piece of briar was used in the creation of The Four Hundred. Bowl sizes vary, ranging from ODA (in Dunhill terms) and up.

Each bowl is hand-carved in a unique pattern. Although Marxman produced more expensive pipes (see discussion of Marxman Heirloom pipes below), The Four Hundred was Marxman's premier pipe offering to the public. Retail price was $25, a very high price tag for a pipe in the 1940s. The pipe was housed in its own velvet lined case, but there was more.

Shapes were fairly similar, but no two pipes were alike. Despite the colossal shape, the pipe was perfectly balanced. Still, one needs a strong set of teeth and a strong jaw to smoke a Four Hundred.

All Four Hundreds possess a 14 karat solid gold band. Pipes came with a personal Certificate of Registry and a Guarantee of Lifetime Service. Each pipe is individually numbered and the owner's name was recorded in the Marxman "Blue Book." This was clearly a pipe for the wealthy or a pipe purchased for a very special occasion.

The numbering system mentioned above is somewhat of an enigma. Numbered Four Hundred Marxmans I have seen are:
14E; C106; 203D; 208D; D2 13 (with "XXV" stamped under the number); 270; 314B; E370.
Confusing, to say the least. And I have a Four Hundred with no number stamping at all! There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the numbering system.

Sometimes letters precede the number, sometimes they come after the number, and sometimes there are no letters. The only consistency with this limited sample is that all of the numbers are less than 400 (Four Hundred).

If we assume that each number is unique, might this suggest that only 400 pipes of The Four Hundred were produced? Of course, we might find a Four Hundred stamped 14D, or 314E. If that were the case, Marxman's production of The Four Hundred could have well exceeded 400 pieces.

CARVED HEADS - The Marxman Heirloom* pipe was an extremely expensive pipe that few pipe smokers could afford. With this in mind, Bob Marx created a line of hand-carved heads in 1948 which sold for $5. These hand-carved pipes had very nice detail and were finished in rich plum or virgin. The series of Carved Heads included the following:

Female Ubangi	Male Ubangi
Large Horse	Alligator
Big Bull	Camel
Indian Squaw	Knight in Armor
Monkey	Steer with Horns
Horse	Bulldog
Friar	Devil
Skull	

In 1949, the following were added:

Ram	Elephant
Buffalo	

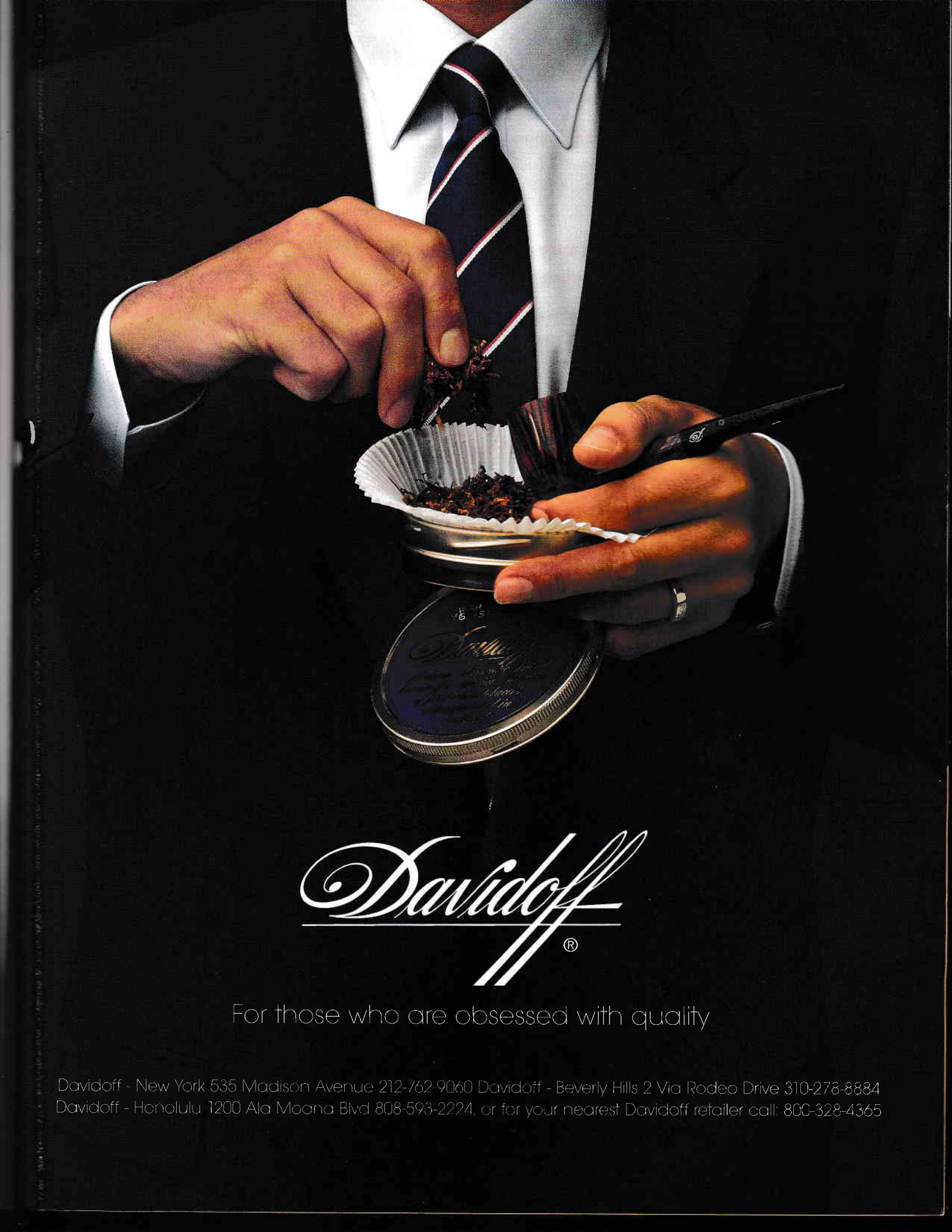
IMPERIAL - Another enigma. Not much is known about this model. I have never seen it listed in any Marxman advertisement or publication. The Imperial could be a Four Hundred "second." The two pipes look very similar. However, the Imperials are not gold-banded nor are they number-stamped. Imperials are beautiful pipes in their own right. I would speculate their original retail price between $15 and $20.

***MARXMAN HEIRLOOM** - The idea for the exclusive Marxman Heirloom pipe began in 1946. Bob Marx was inspired after viewing a collection of hand-carved pipes in various shapes (rosebud-shaped bowls, carved dog head, a flock of wild geese, etc.).

The first series of Heirloom pipes consisted of what Bob Marx called folk art, or objects carved by master craftsmen from nature. These included Indian heads, game birds and hunting dogs. Marx sold these pipes for $250 and they were very popular. This served as the impetus for Bob Marx to go a step further. He created a new firm, known as Marxman Heirlooms.

Through his friendship with Frank Elison (the sculptor of the Heisman Trophy), Marx met with 30 noted sculptors of his time and created 80 one-of-a-kind Marxman Heirloom Pipes. The talented sculptors included Jo Davidson, Cecil Howard, Garlow Howard, Edwin F. Drake, Max Kopp, G.A. Griffin, R.D. Watts, Leslie M. Sommers, Louis Schima, Leon Cutler, Hetrer Hansock, and others. Prices for these extraordinary pipes ranged from $100 to $3,700! The first pipe in this exclusive group, a self-portrait of Jo Davidson, was valued at $7,500. This was Bob Marx's personal favorite, and it was never sold. Others in the series include Old King Cole, Bacchus, The Huntsman, Fox and Pheasant, The Forty Niner, Stalin and Roosevelt Chess, Two Indians Approaching a Dead Buffalo, and a Reclining Semi-Nude Woman, which was carved by Pipe Smoker of the Year for 1947 Cecil Howard. The rare and beautiful Marxman Heirloom Pipes would make for a fascinating study in their own right. ***P&T***

About the author: Bruce Harris bought his first Marxman pipe in 1991. His search for unusual Marxmans, Marxman Four Hundreds, stories about Marxman pipes, and an old tin of Marxman pipe tobacco continues. He can be reached at P.O. Box 4, Fanwood, NJ 07023; E-mail *marxman @home.com*



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#pipes
An online, real-time discussion group available any time, but most active after 9 p.m. EST. Actual identities need not be revealed, as participants are known by nicknames. Conversation ranges through every facet of the pipe hobby and beyond, with members of the group representing all levels of experience.

The channel is available to anyone in the world with Internet access. You will need a shareware program called mIRC, available by going to *http://www.mirc.co.uk*. Instructions for downloading the program are at this site. (Mac users may need to find a Mac shareware site.) Configure mIRC by clicking FILE and SETUP. Click on a DALnet server. When you get a connection, a window will open. Type in #pipes.

Arrowhead Pipe Club
This club sponsors such events as the Michigan Regional Pipe Smoking Contest, which took place on May 3, 1998, in Durand, Michigan. For further information, contact Dan Spaniola, Arrowhead Pipe Club, c/o Paul's Pipe Shop, 647 South Saginaw Street, Flint, MI 48502.

Birchall's International Pipe Association (BIPA—The Sandpipers)
The Sandpipers meet monthly for informal discussions at 8 p.m. at the Warwick Hotel, New South Prom, Blackpool, United Kingdom. The intention of the club is to encourage worldwide friendship among pipe smokers. Activities include smoking competitions, tobacco tastings, trade talks, video evenings, guest speakers and anything pipe-related. Annual membership is £5. For further information contact BIPA, The Pipe Shop, 10, Clifton Street, Blackpool, FY1 1JP, United Kingdom.

The Calumet Pipe Club of North Alabama
The Calumet Pipe Club meets the last Thursday of each month, currently at Finnegan's Pub near Memorial and Drake in Huntsville, Alabama. The philosophy of the club is to promote good fellowship and education through guest lectures, videotapes and shared experience. For further information, contact Rick Holden, *jgalt@traveller.com.*

Capital Area Pipe Smokers (CAPS)
Based in Fairfax, Virginia, this is a long-established club with a solid membership of approximately 40 dedicated pipe smokers. The club hosts field trips to tobacco-related sites and frequently hosts guest speakers at its meetings. For meeting times and other information, contact George Riddle at 703.385.3033.

Carolina Briar Friars
Deep South Classic Pipe and Cigar Smokers Convention
Two-day event held at the Sheraton Airport Plaza, I-85 and Billy Graham Parkway, in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 30 and 31, 1998, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Room reservation may be made by calling the hotel at 704.392.1200. The hotel provides a complimentary shuttle service from the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Table fees are $45 each, with no admission charge.

A Saturday night Down Home Fish Fry with bluegrass band (the band provides music—it's not a side dish) is just part of the friendly Southern atmosphere of this classic show. With more than 80 exhibitor tables, 1998's show promises to be a big one for Charlotte.

Further information may be obtained by calling Fletch Groben at 704.523.8554.

Chesapeake Pipe Club
Informal meetings one Monday per month at 7:30 p.m. at Rothwells Grille, 106 West Padonia Road (Corner of York and Padonia), Timonium, Maryland. For further information call Bill Maitz, 410.825.8940.

Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club
This is the club that hosts the immensely successful Chicago Pipe Show each year. For meeting times and locations, call Frank P. Burla at 630.434.7144 or Michael Reschke at 630.620.5033.

Christopher Morley Pipe Club of Philadelphia
Meets the third Wednesday of every month at Chris' Jazz Cafe, 1421 Sansom Street, at 7 p.m. For further information call Bob Page at 215.567.2972.

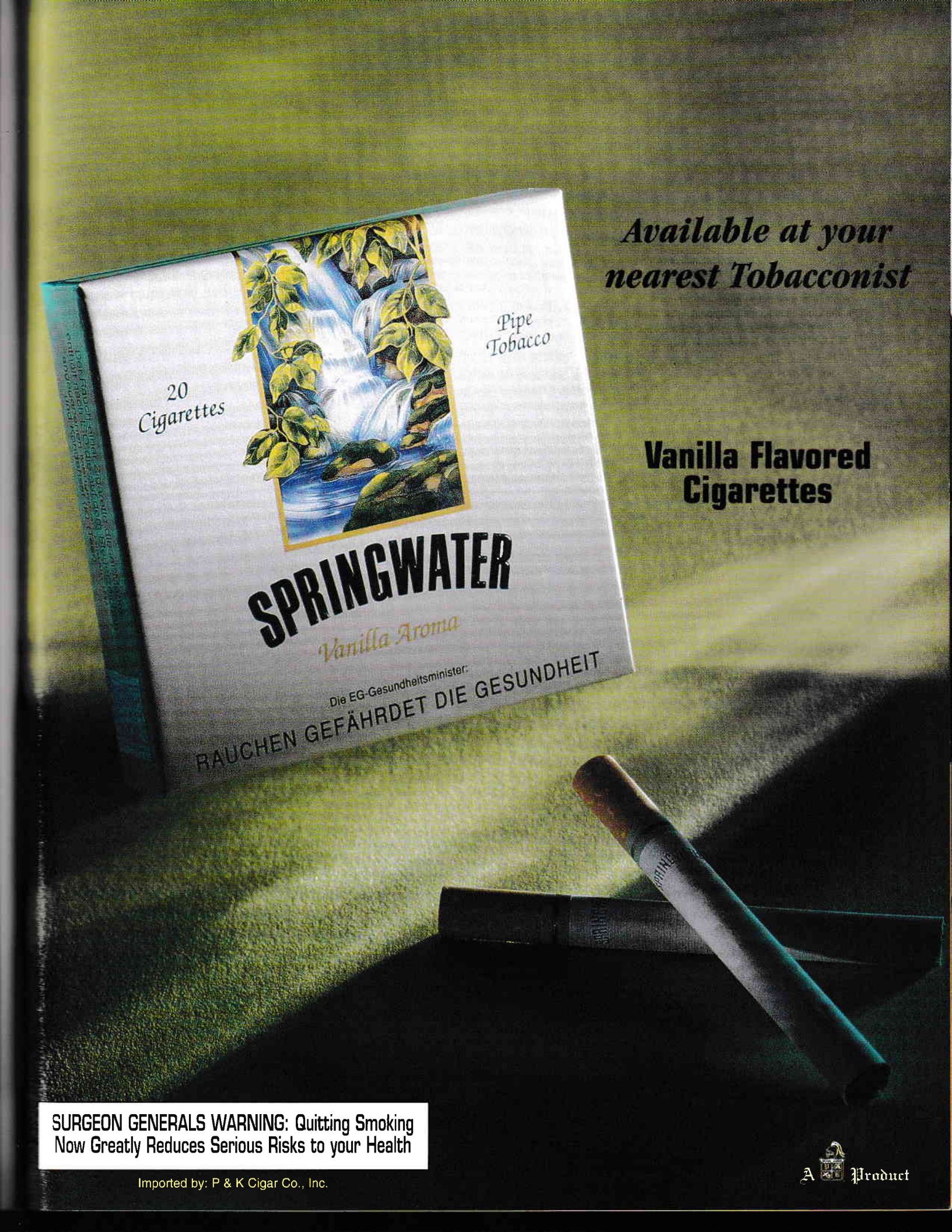
Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers (CORPS)
14th Annual Pipe Smokers' Exposition & Celebration
The annual CORPS pipe show will be held in Richmond, Virginia, on Columbus Day weekend, Oct. 10 and 11 this year, at the Holiday Inn Select, Kroger South Conference Center, 10800 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, Virginia. Room reservations may be made by calling 804.379.3800; a special rate is offered for those who mention the Exposition. For more information contact CORPS at P.O. Box 34023, Richmond, VA. 23234, call 804.342.0761, or e-mail *CorPipeSmk@aol.com.*

Central Oklahoma Pipe Enthusiasts (COPE)
COPE meets on the second Thursday of each month at the Royal Bavaria Brauhaus & Restaurant, 3401 S. Sooner Road, Moore, Oklahoma. Times may change. For further information contact COPE, P.O. Box 7034, Moore, OK 73153; or e-mail *jbaldeman@bix.com.*

Dallas/Fort Worth Pipe Smokers Club
This club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Londoner Tavern, 4291 Belt Line Road, Addison, Texas. Contact Ed Price, *epr065@airmail.net.*

Hudson Valley (N.Y.) Pipe Club
Formed in 1997, the Hudson Valley Pipe Club meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. Since the meetings take place at a number of different restaurants in the Mid-Hudson Valley, contact one of the following people for location and further information: Al DiFalco, 914.756.2574; Rob Denholtz, 914.462.0751 or *den@ulster.net;* Steve Abrams, 914.679.8430 or *snabra@aol.com.*

Nashville Area Pipe Smokers (NAPS), Pipe Show
One-day event, to be held Aug. 8, 1998, the same day as the RTDA (Retail Tobacco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Dealers of America) trade show begins, in Nashville. Featured will be some of the finest pipemakers in the world. Scheduled to attend are Jess Chonowitsch, Lars Ivarsson, Julius Vesz, Bill Taylor, Per Hansen and Ulf Noltensmeier of S. Bang, J.T. Cooke, Giancarlo Guidi of Ser Jacopo, and Mike Butera.

For room reservations, call the Ramada Inn, Music Valley Drive, Nashville, 615.889.0800. Table reservations and additional information may be obtained by calling Keith Moore at 888.292.9576.

New York Pipe Club/Show
The New York Pipe Show is held twice a year, and the next one will be Saturday, Sept. 12—the Saturday immediately following Labor Day—at the Ramada Hotel in Newark, New Jersey, just 10 minutes from the Newark International Airport. The hotel runs shuttles from the airport every 20 minutes, so you are assured of reliable transportation. Reservations may be made by calling the Ramada Hotel at 800.223.8285.

The New York Pipe Club meets the first Tuesday of every month at Muldoon's Pub, 3rd Ave., between 43rd and 44th Streets, at 6 p.m. Dues: $2 per meeting. For further information contact Sailorman Jack, 212.288.3832.

The North American Society of Pipe Collectors 1998 Swap/Sell Pipe Show
Double-check your calendar, as this show has changed its date to Aug. 29, 1998, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The location remains the same, however: The Holiday Inn at 328 West Lane Avenue in Columbus, Ohio. Call 614.292.4848 for reservations; remember to mention the show for a special room rate.

This year's NASPC Show promises to be the largest yet, with 83 tables available. Several great pipemakers have already signed up: Tim West, Jim Seman, Paul Bonaquisti, Sam Learned and Steve Weiner, and more will undoubtedly follow. Mel Feldman of The Smoker in Albany, New York, will have seven tables of new and estate pipes. PCCA (Pipe Collector's Club of America) will have its usual selection of tobaccos and new pipes, and dozens of other collectors and retailers will be on hand. Don't miss this fine show.

With 350 members in 23 states and Canada, this club also publishes one of the finest newsletters you will find. For more information on the show, or for a complimentary newsletter, contact Bill Unger at 614.252.2904 or *ohio@pipes.org*.

Pipe Club of Bridlington
A growing club in Northeast Yorkshire, England, the Pipe Club of Bridlington boasts memberships from around the country, as well as a few honorary American members. For further information contact Club Secretary David J.F. Manders at *d.manders@cirgin.net*.

Pipe Club of London
Formed in 1969, the Pipe Club of London has more than 500 members in 32 countries. Meetings are held at the Royal British Legion, 4 Grotto Passage, London, on the third Thursday of each month. Activities include tobacco tastings, talks on pipes and tobaccos, film and video shows, pipe smoking competitions, visits to pipe and tobacco factories—and the camaraderie of pipe smokers. The club publishes a newsletter approximately twice a year. Information on joining the Pipe Club of London may be obtained by contacting P.C. Wiseman, 40 Crescent Drive, Petts Wood, Orpington BR5 1BD, United Kingdom.

St. Louis Pipe Club
The St. Louis Pipe Club meets twice monthly to discuss topics of interest to pipe smokers and collectors. Meetings are informal and include discussions on pipe-related books and literature, and the sampling of tobacco blends. Meetings are on the second Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. at John Dengler Tobacconist, 700 S. Main, St. Charles, Missouri; and the fourth Saturday of each month at 8 p.m. at the Train Depot, 14070 New Halls Ferry, Florissant, Missouri. For further information contact Jay Milton at 314.837.5902 (days) or 618.656.7584 (evenings), or Bob Calloway at 314.946.8555.

Sherlock Holmes Pipe Club
Meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Holiday Inn, Mansfield, Massachusetts. For further information contact Steve Smith, *fourdots@ma.ultranet.com*, or Don Powers at 617.449.0380.

South Florida Briar Brotherhood
Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. at London Pub Too on U.S. 441 and SR7. *Smoke Signals*, the club's newsletter, features interesting articles, tobacco reviews and a healthy dose of humor. You can subscribe by contacting Grant Porter at *Smoke Signals*, P.O. Box 450967, Sunrise, FL 33345-0967, or find the club's Web page at *http://se.mediaone.net/~pipesman*.

Triangle Area Pipe Smokers (TAPS) 1999 Pipe and Cigar Expo
The next TAPS show will be on Saturday, March 20, 1999. Its location is to be announced. This Raleigh, North Carolina, club meets the second Thursday of every month at the Holiday Inn-Crabtree at 6:30 p.m. for sandwiches, smoke and general frivolity. Further information may be obtained by calling Chuck Stanion at 919.872.5040.

The Universal Coterie of Pipe Smokers (TUCOPS)
The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris, which appears approximately twice a year, averages 75-100 pages and is the virtual meeting place for members of the Coterie. Financed by editor Tom Dunn—with the help of contributions from appreciative readers—*The Ephemeris* is packed full of letters, articles, Sherlockiana, antiques and reports on everything pipe-related. This is a must-have subscription for the serious pipe enthusiast. You may obtain a subscription form by writing to Tom Dunn, 20-37 120th Street, College Point, NY 11356.

(*P&T* receives dozens of inquiries every month from pipe smokers who are searching for a pipe club in their general vicinity. If you have a club or are starting one, please send us the pertinent information so that we can list it here. Write to *Pipes and tobaccos*, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029, or send an email to *cstanion@speccomm.com*.)

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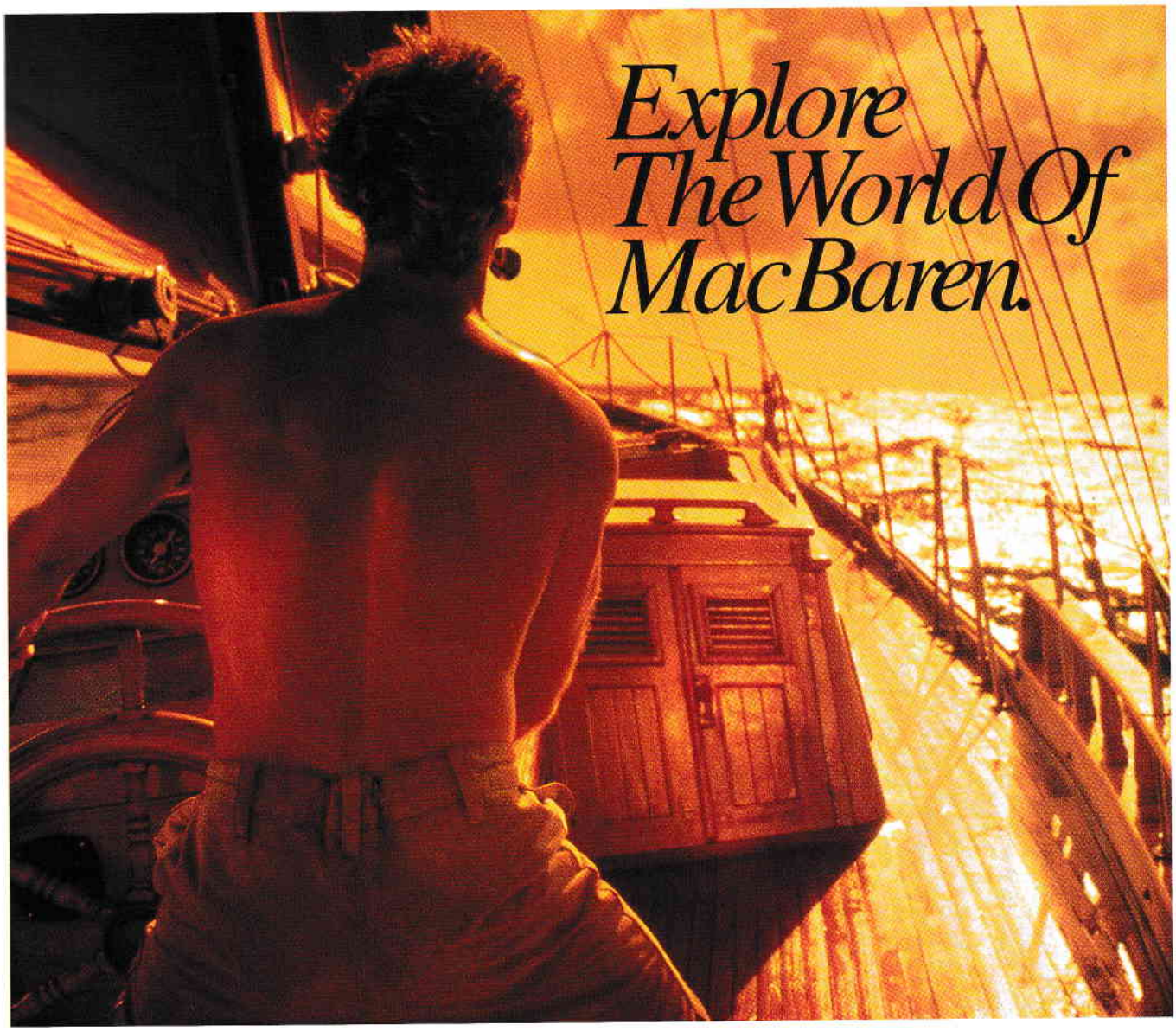

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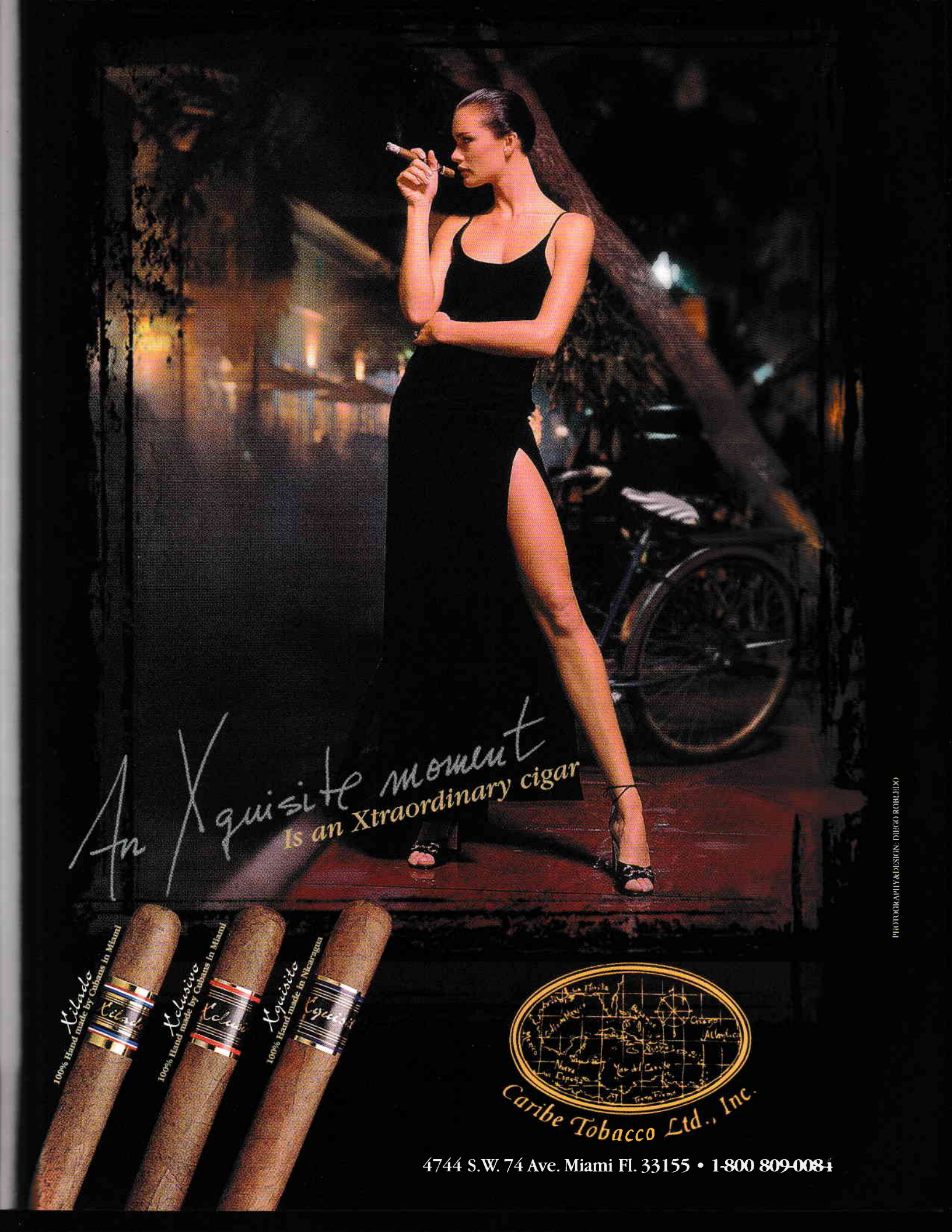
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